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SMALL BUSINESS Development Centers

Assistance For Entrepreneurs



Haven't the foggiest idea how to harness your entrepreneurial spirit, pull yourself anywhere using bootstraps, or think in or out of a box? Starting and running your own business is tough, but fortunately for prospective and current small business owners, SBDCs (Small Business Development Centers; asbdc-us.org) dispense with the clichés and offer training, counseling, and other assistance to help you craft your vision into a real-world success.

Run A Small Business

Pooling resources from federal, state, and local governments, as well as the private sector and the educational community, The Association of Small Business Development Centers is truly a joint venture with a vested interest in fostering small business growth. For an overview of what the SBDC can offer you and your small business, visit bit.ly/dKYe2a. The SBA (Small Business Administration; www.sba.gov) is partnered with SBDCs.

Help On Your Turf

You may be surprised to learn that there's probably an SBDC branch nearby; there are locations in all 50 states, in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and even in the U.S. territories. There are 63 nationwide Lead Small Business Development Centers coordinating program services for every sub-center and satellite location in each state. Centers are made up of directors, full-time

staff members, and various part-time staff and volunteers.

The best way to contact your nearest SBDC is to visit the Association of Small Business Development Centers' Web site (asbdc-us.org), input your ZIP code into the Find Your Nearest Small Business Development Center text box, and then click Go. The results page will highlight Lead Centers but rank centers in order of those closest to your location. Often, SBDCs partner with universities and colleges, and

can expect from your nearest SBDC include help with financial, marketing, production, organization, engineering, and technical problems and access to feasibility studies that can flesh out a fledgling business plan. Some SBDCs also offer affordable training seminars to help with various aspects of running a business. You can also rest assured that your business with the SBDC will remain confidential.

Women's Business Centers

The SBA offers WBCs (Women's Business Centers), which directly serve female entrepreneurs through nearly 100 educational centers nationwide. This organization strives to assist women in overcoming the hurdles they face in today's business environment by offering business management training and technical assistance to all women, with a special emphasis on economically or socially disadvantaged women. The services and training programs are also commonly offered in multiple languages to enable those who speak English as a second language or are still learning English. To find your nearest WBC, visit bit.ly/hs3st2.

Small Business, Big Payoff

Small business owners know that achieving success is about taking risks, innovating, and making tough decisions day in and day out. Thanks to the services offered at the SBA, SBDCs, and WBCs, you're not on your own. ■

Frequent Question

If you're like many other people starting a small business, funding is at the top of your mind. A common question that entrepreneurs have for SBDCs is: "Am I eligible for grant money?"

The answer depends on the nature of your business. [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) (www.grants.gov) will give you a clear picture of your options before your visit to a Small Business Development Center.

tend to be found on campuses across the country. On the search results page, you'll also find a link to the local office's Web page, email address, phone number, a fax number if available, and address.

The Closest Thing To A Free Lunch

The services offered may vary by location, but all SBDCs offer many services free of charge. Some typical services you

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The *New Wave* of Power Supplies for Your Slim Line or Mini ITX System

Replacing and upgrading your computer's power supply can be a very meticulous ordeal, especially if you are an owner of a slim line desktop. Due to the rise of smaller systems a smaller and capable power supply is needed, which brought the introduction of the FLEX, PS3, SFX, FTFX, and TFX form factor power supplies.

The original power supplies in these slim line and mini-ITX desktops are usually rated at 160-200Watts which is pretty much standard in the mini-ITX world, but it does get the trick done unless you're looking to upgrade your slim line or mini-ITX desktop by incorporating a more powerful GPU. If you're looking to upgrade you will also need more power. If it is an HTPC or media server this is important because with a more powerful video card you will need more power.

First let's review each power supply form factor and what it is used for:

FLEX: This PSU form factor is generally viewed as the go to power supply for all slim line or mini-ITX cases. Their shape and face is what makes them so "Flexible" and became the root of their name. (Compatible with

most HP Pavilions, Achme, IBM SurePOS, Shuttle, HP Media Smart)

PS3: Still widely used for most micro ATX systems for a space saving PSU this is generally the way to go especially in the depth department. Labeled as the Hercules, Athena Power has made adjustments to their PS3 form factor power supplies that makes it more compatible with many makes and model systems. (Compatible with most HP Pavilions, Presario, Dell Dimension, XPS, Sony Vaio, and the IBM xSeries.)

SFX: Listed as the Apollo, Athena Power has gone where no SFX has gone before by increasing the wattage of this type of PSU. This replacement or upgrade PSU is generally used for micro ATX systems. (Compatible with most HP Pavilions, Compaq Presario, E-machine eMonster, eTower, and Gateway Performance.)

FTFX: Is a rare breed in the PSU form factor which makes it tougher for consumers who own a desktop that only fits this type of power supply. The FTFX is a hybrid of the Flex and TFX form factor and is generally used in Acer computers. (Compatible with some Acer, Dell, and Gateway computers.)

TFX: Last but not least we have the TFX form factor power supply. Athena Power offers the manual version of this product as well and is generally used in most slim line computers. (Compatible with most Slim Line S series, HP Pavilions, and more.)

Whether you are looking to upgrade or replace your slim line or mini-ITX desktop you will need to find a compatible power supply. This is where the most difficult part comes in, by buying the stock PSU you are looking to spend 70-100 dollars for that same



AP-MP4ATX47FE

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AP-MPS3ATX47E

FlexATX 350W
\$69.99

PSU that broke down with the same wattage, but luckily there are other solutions and Athena Computer Power provides it.

Athena Computer Power has a plethora of replacement or upgrade power supplies for all users. They have taken feedback from customers and have taken the initiative and developed compact PSUs from all form factors that you will need to replace your power supply. Offering up to 400 Watts of power, Athena Power is leading the way in the slim line and mini-ITX upgrade and replacement PSU market.

In addition Athena Power has certified most of their replacement power supplies with the 80PLUS certification. Incorporating active PFC their PSUs are indeed truly a great and affordable upgrade.

Athena Power also offers total customer service and solution, their commitment to assist customers in understanding what PSU is best for their system and their 1 on 1 consultation with their customers are also a plus especially if you are uncertain on what PSU to purchase.

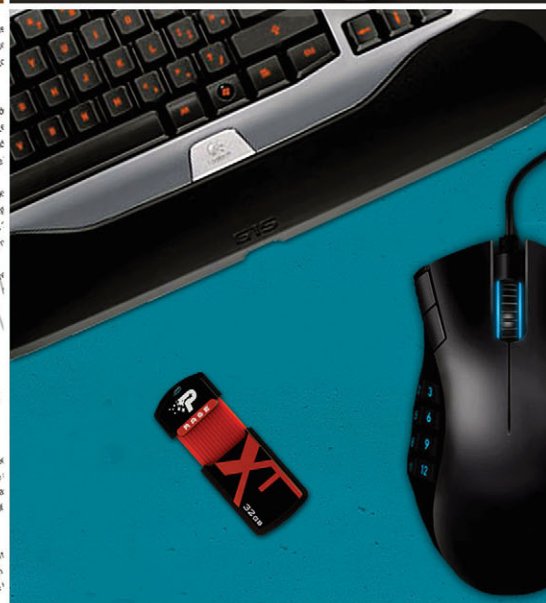
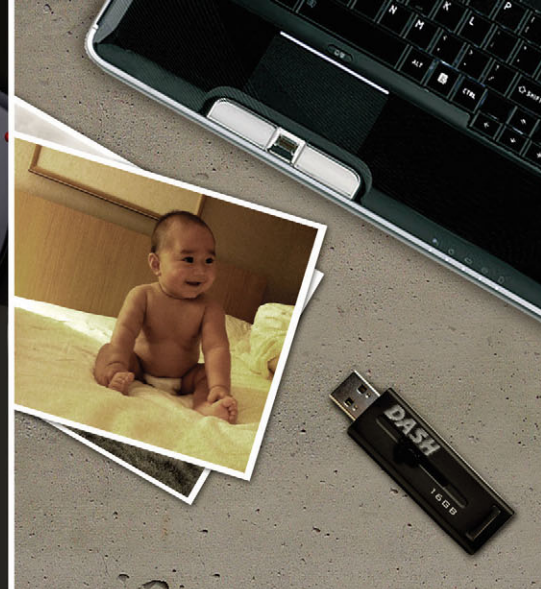
For more detail information about these products, please visit Athena Computer Power Corp. at www.athenapower.us

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Navigate Windows

'Round, 'Round, Get Around

If you've recently made the jump from Windows XP to Windows 7, or if you're new to PC computing in general, it can be a little hard to find your way around the Windows operating system. But fear not.

We'll show you how to find important items in Windows, including individual files and useful settings panels. In our examples we'll discuss procedures for Win7, but our tips also apply in varying degrees to WinXP/Vista.

Quest For Files

To look for a particular file, such as a document or photo, click Start at the lower left of the screen. Right above it, you'll see the Search Programs And Files field. Type in the full or partial name of the file, such as **Myreport.doc**, and press ENTER to begin the search.

Win7 will generate a list of files, programs, email messages, and other items possibly related to the keyword you typed in. Click the file you want to open or right-click it to select another option. For example, Open File Location will show you everything in the folder (a collection of files) where the file resides.

Go Exploring

Windows Explorer is the operating system's file management utility. Not to be confused with the Internet Explorer browser or Windows itself, the program lets you look through the files and folders on your computer's storage drive(s). Windows Explorer also

lets you move, rename, copy, and delete files, so it's important to know how to find it.

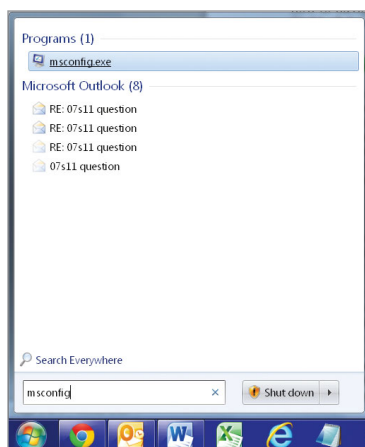
To launch it, right-click Start and then click Open Windows Explorer. Alternatively, you can press WIN-E, meaning the Windows logo key and the *E* key simultaneously.

Windows Explorer's left panel offers you starting points for your exploration, such as your computer's hard drive (usually C:) and optical drive (often D: or E:). Click the C: drive, and in the right panel, you'll see the folders it contains. Double-click one of its folders to reveal its files and/or subfolders, and in turn, double-click a subfolder to view *its* contents.

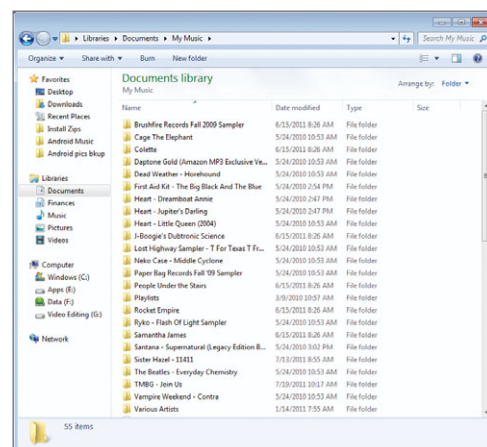
There's no Up button in Windows 7, but you can click the Back arrow at the top left of the window to return to a directory you visited earlier. Alternatively, you can click the name of a drive or folder in the Address bar at the top of the window to jump "up" one or more steps. (The Address bar shows you the location of the folder you're currently viewing in the hierarchy of the file system.) Click an arrow icon in the Address bar and a drop-down menu will let you move not only "up" the file path, but also "sideways" to another location at that level.

Take Control

Another crucial area is the Control Panel (click Start and Control Panel). Here you'll find powerful tools grouped into categories such as System And Security, Appearance And Personalization, and more. Microsoft thoughtfully



Win7's search field lets you hunt for files and launch programs by name.



Windows Explorer lets you navigate the folder structure of the file system.

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provided links to help you quickly perform common tasks, such as uninstalling an application you don't want and changing your Desktop background image.

There's a quicker way to access Windows' System Properties than by navigating the default layout of the Control Panel. Press WIN-PAUSE, and you'll have access to information about your PC's hardware and OS. At the upper left, you'll find links to useful destinations such as the Device Manager (a more detailed list of your hardware) and System Protection (System Restore).

As for your PC's software, Windows Task Manager (press CTRL-SHIFT-ESC) shows you the apps and processes currently running, how much CPU time and memory they're using, and buttons you can use to terminate problematic ones (End Task/End Process).

Meanwhile, the System Configuration utility (type **msconfig** in the Search Programs And Files field and press ENTER) lets you disable programs that start up when Windows does. Click the Startup tab and then deselect the checkboxes next to the ones you don't want running automatically. Click Apply when you're done. ■



If you don't like the Control Panel's Category view, click the View By drop-down menu for other options.

Registry Cleaners

There's a very important part of Windows that you may not want to navigate, as any changes you make take effect immediately and can cause problems with your system. It's called the Registry. Since Win95, Windows has used a Registry to manage all the settings, software, and hardware on a PC.

The OS' Regedit.exe tool (click Start; in the Search Programs And Files field, type **regedit** and press ENTER) lets you view and change Registry settings. However, we don't recommend that you use it unless you know what you're doing.

That said, there are third-party tools you can use to help the Registry perform its best. Registry cleaners such as PC Tools Registry Mechanic (\$29.99 for a one-year subscription for up to three PCs; www.pctools.com) aim to safely remove digital detritus such as orphaned entries from incompletely uninstalled software. Registry Mechanic also defragments the part of the hard drive that stores the Registry files, which can speed up Windows' performance a bit.

Most importantly, the utility lets you make a backup copy of your Registry before it makes any changes, so you can restore things back to normal if the cleaning process causes any issues. In a sense, Registry Mechanic helps you navigate the perilous waters of Registry optimization for smoother sailing in your computing sessions.



PC Tools' Registry Mechanic is designed to prune away obsolete entries from Windows' Registry files, which can benefit overall PC performance.

Glossary

Checkbox: A square, white box next to a settings option. Click it to select or deselect it.

Click: To click an item on-screen, move the mouse pointer over it and press the left mouse button once. Clicking lets you select options, follow links and arrows, and launch apps from the Taskbar at the bottom of the screen.

Click and drag: To click and drag an item somewhere, such as a file to the Recycle Bin, click it and hold down the button as you move the mouse. Let up the button to release the item.

drop-down menu: An options menu with an arrow icon you can click to see an expanded list of choices. When you click

one of the options, the menu will close, and your selection will remain visible.

Double-click: This means to press the left mouse button twice. You'll need to double-click a Desktop icon, for example, to launch a program or open a folder.

Hover: To move the mouse pointer over an object without clicking it. Sometimes, hovering will make a descriptive word or phrase appear.

Link: Just like a hyperlink on a Web page, you can click a link in Windows to access another feature or open a settings panel. Windows 7 links are often underlined words in a different color than the surrounding text.

Menu: A list of features and/or options.

Mouse pointer: The on-screen arrow you move with the mouse.

Right-click: To right-click something, move the mouse pointer over it and then press the right mouse button once.

Slider: A slider lets you click and drag an item along a line to adjust a setting. For example, you can click the speaker icon near Windows 7's clock to access the slider for the Volume control.

Tab: Some settings panels have tabs along the top like manila folders in a file cabinet full of paperwork. Clicking a tab reveals other settings.

Personalize Your Desktop

Make Windows 7 Your Own

Every operating system includes ways to tweak its features to match your preferences, and Windows 7 is no different. In this article, we'll focus on changes you can apply to the Desktop and particularly the personalization features associated with backgrounds, the Start menu, Taskbar, and Desktop icons.

Change Your Background

Your Desktop background (also called wallpaper) doesn't have to be the Windows default image: You can get creative and turn your background into a personal photo, a Windows-supplied image, a single color, or a photo outlined in color. If you can't decide which image to use, it's also possible to create a slideshow.

To access your wallpaper settings, click Start and Control Panel. Type the words **desktop background** in the Search Control Panel field. Next, select Change Desktop Background. Note any images that you see immediately—if you would like to use one as your wallpaper, click it, and then click Save Changes. Alternatively, you can click the drop-down menu next to Picture Location to view other categories. If you open Windows Desktop Backgrounds, seven

photo groups will appear. Choose from Architecture, Characters, Landscapes, Nature, Scenes, United States, and Windows. The second category, Pictures Library, displays the images stored in My Pictures and Sample Pictures (Top Rated Photos includes Sample Pictures, too). There's a broad-ranging palette of Solid Colors to choose from, as well, if you don't want to be distracted by busy images.

Your list may also include pictures from your Desktop or Internet Explorer.

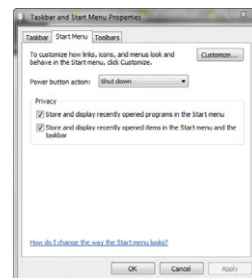
Next, navigate down to Picture Position and click the arrow to the right. This feature lets you customize the placement of a background picture. Selecting Fill will expand the image beyond every edge of the display. Fit doesn't alter the image, but rather frames it instead.

Stretch manipulates the pixels to fill the screen. Tile minimizes the size of the image and repeats it throughout the display. Clicking Center will place the image directly in the middle of the monitor.

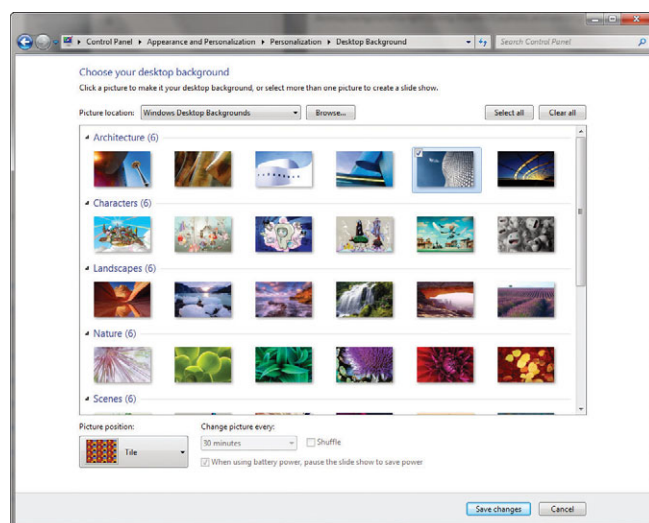
Additionally, you can modify slideshow settings in this window. To do so, click the arrow under Change Picture Every and select the length of time you would like to see each photo on your Desktop. When you've completed all of these steps, click Save Changes. For the quickest option, you can turn any image into a Desktop background by right-clicking a photo and selecting Set As Desktop Background.

Start Menu & Taskbar Options

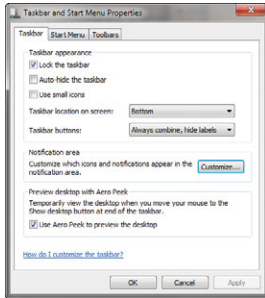
The Start menu is one of three sections on the Taskbar, which is the horizontal bar that fills the bottom of your monitor. We'll address the Taskbar's middle section (that shows your Quick Launch toolbar) and Notification Area—the far-right section that



When you right-click the Taskbar, select Properties, and click the Start Menu tab, you'll be able to make changes to the organization of the Start menu.



In the Personalization section of the Control Panel, you can change your Desktop background to the provided pictures or your own photos.



The Taskbar properties tab shows you how to customize the way your Taskbar buttons behave.

displays alerts and program statuses—later. It's also home to lists and features that help you find programs and folders in Win7. By clicking the Start button in the bottom-left corner of your screen, you'll see all of the following: pinned programs, recently opened items, the Search box, the custom right pane, and the Shut Down command button.

Pinning a program to the Start menu is one way to access it quickly, especially if you open several programs on a regular basis. To pin a program, locate it by entering its title in the Search box, right-clicking it, and clicking Pin To Start Menu. Right-click any program in the Start menu and click Unpin From Start Menu if you want to take it off the pin list.

Recently opened items will show up under your pinned programs, but you can remove them to declutter the menu if you like. To unpin your recently accessed programs, right-click the program and select Remove From This List.

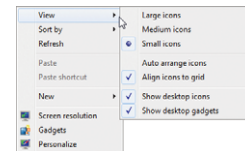
Everything on the other side of the Start menu comprises the right pane. This area provides links to commonly accessed locations in Windows. The default locations are as follows: your personal folder (with the name you've assigned to it), Documents, Pictures, Music, Games (depending on which version of Windows you're running) Computer (to link you to drives and hardware), Control Panel, Devices And Printers, Default Programs, and Help And Support. Win7 lets you manage the right

pane through the Control Panel. Open the Control Panel, click Appearance And Personalization, and then select Taskbar And Start Menu. Choose the Start Menu tab and click the Customize button. When the Customize Start Menu dialog box opens, click your preferred options for the right pane items and click OK when you're finished.

Looking at the Taskbar in its entirety once again, realize that the items in the middle section of the Taskbar and that Taskbar itself are moveable. Anytime you open a file, folder, or program, Win7 assigns it a button in the Taskbar that you can use to minimize, maximize, and manage the aforementioned items. To reorder any item in the Taskbar, click and drag it to a new spot.

To customize the Taskbar, right-click it and select Properties. Select the Taskbar tab, and in the Taskbar Appearance section, checkmark the options you want to apply to the Taskbar, change the Taskbar's location, or modify Taskbar buttons. For the latter two you will choose from the options in their corresponding drop-down menus.

In the Notification Area section, click the Customize button, and from here you will have the opportunity to change your notifications that are on the far right side of the Taskbar by clicking the associated drop-down menus, selecting behaviors for particular icons (such as Show Icon And Notifications or Hide Icon And Notifications), and clicking OK.



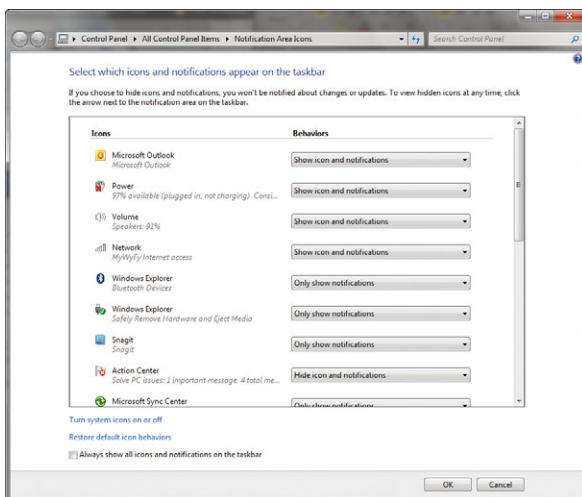
To modify the size of icons, right-click the Desktop, click View, and choose a size.

Icon Organization

Instead of accessing your folders and programs through the Start menu, you can create and use an icon for files and other items on your Desktop. These are called Desktop shortcuts.

To add an icon to the Desktop, you will start by finding the file, application, or other item for which you want to create a shortcut. For example, if you want to make a shortcut for Microsoft Excel, locate it by clicking the Start menu, All Programs, and Microsoft Office. Right-click Microsoft Excel and select Send To. Next click Desktop (Create Shortcut). A new shortcut to that item will appear on your Desktop.

To hide icons, right-click your Desktop, select View, and if you see a check mark next to Show Desktop Icons, uncheck it. To see all of your icons again, perform the same steps to reselect Show Desktop Icons. In the View menu, you're also able to change the size of the icons: Simply click Small Icons, Medium Icons, or Large Icons. Want to get rid of an icon? Right-click it, click Delete and select Yes. (You may be asked for the administrator password. If necessary, type it in and proceed.) ■



Notifications will remain visible or hidden based on your selections in the Notifications Area Icons window.

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PC Installation & Tech Support

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Geek Squad Tech Support Services



PC Setup

When Geek Squad sets up your PC, it hits the ground running. Geek Squad Agents can install an antivirus program of your choice and install updates for Windows 7 so your computer has the protection it needs.

With any computer, there is a chance that at some point your computer may get a virus or experience a system failure. Geek Squad can create a restore CD that will help you get your system up and running quickly after a crash.



Tech Support

Geek Squad also provides an in-depth tech support plan. Geek Squad can install the operating system and software titles, hardware components, and memory. Geek Squad can also repair your computer if it is damaged.

Geek Squad Agents can run full-system diagnostics to find possible component problems or virus threats. And if a virus is detected, Geek Squad Agents will remove it from your system. They can also help you reset passwords.



Black Tie Protection


Geek Squad's Black Tie Protection plans cover desktops as well as laptops and netbooks. For all computers, this includes protection for normal wear and tear, pixel repair, and power surge repair. And if for some reason your computer has to be repaired four times, Geek Squad will replace it with a comparable alternative.

Specifically for laptops and netbooks, the Black Tie Protection plan covers a single battery replacement. An advanced plan is available that also adds protection for accidental damage from handling, so you don't have to worry if you drop your laptop.



Best Buy Trade-In

Best Buy also provides a great way to future-proof your computer purchases. Whether you wait six months or two years to decide you need an upgrade, Best Buy will let you trade in your PC for a percentage of the original cost to ease the burden of buying a new PC. Computers are evolving faster than ever, and the Best Buy Trade-In option makes it easier and less expensive to keep up.



Best Buy For BUSINESS

Your Company's Technology Partner

We're all familiar with Best Buy's iconic brick-and-mortar stores throughout the United States. Many of us have also used BestBuy.com to find great products at competitive prices. And savvy businesses know they can get the equipment they need with the help of Best Buy For Business (www.bestbuybusiness.com).

Best Buy For Business is a comprehensive service to help your company choose the right technology products for its needs, implement them properly, and maintain them over time.

An onsite consultation may be the first step when you choose Best Buy For Business as your company's technology partner. Its agents are well-versed in assessing the needs of your firm and determining which commercial-grade electronics and software can meet them.

For continuity, a dedicated Best Buy For Business representative will handle

your company's account. He or she will be your go-to person when you have questions, concerns, or new orders to place. And when technical glitches crop up, Best Buy's legendary Geek Squad will be on the job, providing you with 24/7 tech support to get you back in business.

Your Best Buy For Business account will give you access to commercial-grade purchasing options such as ordering in bulk and the use of purchase orders. Your rep can assist you with the logistics of your orders, and will get in touch to make sure that your products

arrive on time. You can even set up various payment options, including net 30 terms.

Perhaps the best way to get a handle on Best Buy For Business is to visit BestBuyBusinessDistrict.com. It's a community of users with Q&As, a



FOR BUSINESS

(877) 393-1038 | www.bestbuybusiness.com

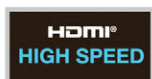
knowledge center, and brief videos that bring to life true stories of Best Buy For Business helping small businesses to run their technology. ■



Smartphone. Tablet. Camera.

Let PNY take your device to the big screen.

Take the action from your smartphone, tablet or camera and connect with a PNY Active High Speed HDMI® Cable - playback and enjoy on your HDTV.



Smart Active Cable



PNY's Active High Speed HDMI Features

- 70% thinner than standard cables*
- Ultra Thin & Flexible
- Built-in chip delivers Active signal control
- Resolution up to 4096x2160p at 24Hz as used in state of the art digital theaters
- Ultra High Speed 10.2Gbps for smooth motion video
- Limited Lifetime Warranty

For Your Smartphone & Tablet

PNY's HDMI Micro to HDMI cable is perfect for connecting your smartphone or tablet to a HDTV and sharing your content with friends and family.

For Your Digital Camera

From the amateur to professional photographer; PNY's HDMI Mini to HDMI cable is the optimal solution for high quality photo & HD video viewing.

For Your Home Theatre

PNY's HDMI to HDMI cable is ideal for connecting your DVD player, AV receiver, game console or PC to your HDTV.

For more information on PNY products visit: **www.PNY.com**



Small Business Resources

The Web has a trove of resources for SOHOs (small and home offices) and small businesses—if you know where to look. Find an association that can help you meet your goals; get information from the government about loans, grants, and taxes; and stay up-to-date with the best small business newsletters and blogs. If you have a pressing question, pose it on a forum to see what your peers have to say.



ASSOCIATIONS & SUPPORT

Better Business Bureau

www.bbb.org
(703) 276-0100
4200 Wilson Blvd.
STE 800
Arlington, VA 22203-1838

Main Street Alliance (MSA)

mainstreetalliance.org
info@mainstreetalliance.org
(603) 831-1835
3518 S. Edmunds St.
Seattle, WA 98118

National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB)

www.nfib.com
(800) 634-2669
(615) 872-5800
53 Century Blvd.
STE 250
Nashville, TN 37214

National Small Business Association (NSBA)

nsba.biz
(202) 293-8830
1156 15th St., STE 1100
Washington, DC 20005

SCORE

www.score.org
(800) 634-0245
(703) 487-3612
1175 Herndon Pkwy
STE 900
Herndon, VA 20170

Small Business Development Centers Network (SBDcNET)

www.sbdcn.net
(800) 689-1912
501 W. Durango Blvd.
San Antonio, TX 78207



BLOGS

Signal vs. Noise

37signals.com/svn/posts

Small Business Search Marketing

www.smallbusinesssem.com

Small Biz Bee

smallbizbee.com

Small Business Trends

smallbiztrends.com

The Small Business Blog

www.sme-blog.com

The Entrepreneurial Mind

www.drjeffcornwall.com



FORUMS

Small Business Administration Community

www.sba.gov/community

The Small Business Community Forums

www.smallbusinessforums.org

Small Business Ideas Forum

www.smallbusinessbrief.com/forum

The Young Entrepreneur

www.youngentrepreneur.com/forum

Associations
Blogs
GOVERNMENT
Forums
SUPPORT



GOVERNMENT

Grants.gov

House Committee On Small Business

smallbusiness.house.gov

Small Business and Self-Employed Tax Center

www.irs.gov/businesses/small

Small Business Administration (SBA)

sba.gov

U.S. Copyright Office

copyright.gov

U.S. Department of Labor

dol.gov

U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship

sbc.senate.gov



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**TURBO
BOOST**
Technology 2.0



Thrilling performance. Breathtaking visuals.

Get stunning performance with a boost with an Intel® Core™ i5 processor.



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More is possible with Intel Inside.®

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All products in this
special computing guide
are available at Best Buy,
the world's largest consumer
electronics retailer.

Do Something New TODAY

A lot has happened since the PC rose to prominence, and today there are a myriad of ways to get your computing fix. We'll introduce you to four computing devices and describe their unique attributes.



All-In-One

An all-in-one refers to a computer with the tower and flat-panel monitor combined into a single unit. All-in-one computers take up significantly less space than traditional desktop PCs, and many feature touchscreen displays.

Perfect For:

- Families looking for a fun-to-use system for basic tasks and Web browsing
- Kings and queens of the kitchen looking for a digital cooking assistant
- Those who want to reduce clutter on their desks

Find out what you can do with an all-in-one on page 24.



Laptop

A laptop is a mobile computer that relies on one or more wireless technologies to communicate and a rechargeable battery for power. Larger and heavier laptops are capable of better performance, while thinner and lighter laptops offer significantly better battery life.

Perfect For:

- Road warriors who rarely work and play in the same place twice
- Entertainment junkies who like computing in all corners of the home
- Those with space limits or who prefer uncluttered workspaces

Find out what you can do with a laptop on page 26.



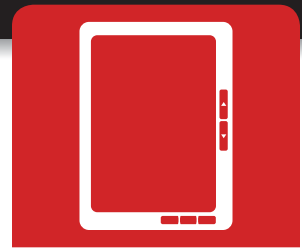
Tablet

A tablet is a touchscreen device running a smartphone-based operating system that relies on apps for its major functions. Thinner and lighter than laptops, tablets are more mobile than laptops, but they can do many of the same tasks. Tablets generally boast all-day battery life or better.

Perfect For:

- Mobile people who enjoy videos, casual games, Web browsing, and more on the go
- Social butterflies who stay connected to friends and family wherever they are
- Someone who likes her computing experiences short, intuitive, and fun

Find out what you can do with a tablet on page 28.



eReader

eReaders are purpose-built for reading digital books. These devices are smaller than laptops, some have touchscreens, and battery life is generally better than that of laptops or tablets. They offer color LCD or monochrome screens.

Perfect For:

- Avid book readers and magazine flippers
- Students who want to lighten their textbook loads
- Frequent travelers and commuters

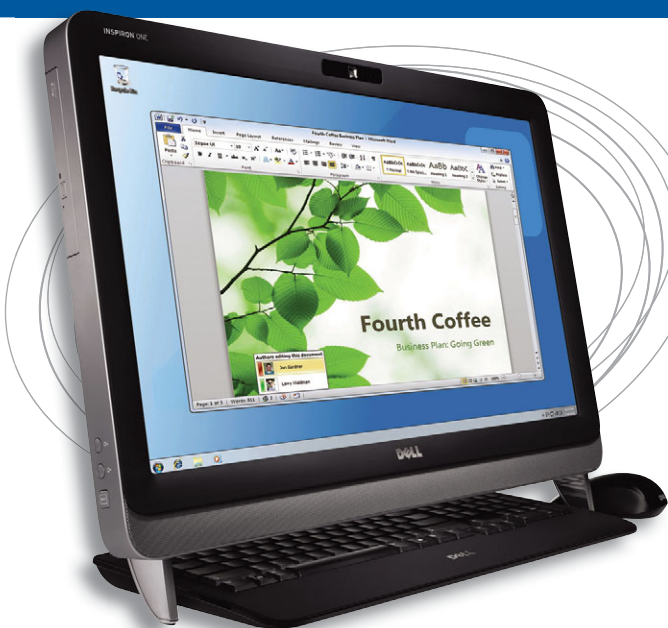
Find out what you can do with an eReader on page 30.



What You Can Do With An

All-In-One

As the name implies, an all-in-one features a space-saving design that lets you put it in places that you would maybe never consider installing a desktop computer, such as the living room, kitchen, bedroom, and more. Read on for a more comprehensive breakdown of the benefits of an all-in-one.



Big Display

Because AIOs are stationary, they generally feature large displays, many of which support HD resolutions. On an AIO, your photo albums and home movies have never looked better.

Touchscreen Interface

Touchscreens are a feature of some AIOs. They let you quickly access the apps and features you want by tapping the respective icons on the screen, which makes for a much more intuitive computing experience.

Something For Everyone

Because AIOs are fully functioning computers, there's something for everybody, including entertainment, document creation, Web surfing, online shopping, email, video chat, light gaming, photo editing and sharing, and streaming movies and TV shows.



All-In-One

**Easy For Everyone**

Thanks to the large screen and touchscreen simplicity, AIOs are great PCs for people of all ages, especially those who're intimidated by traditional PCs. Put an AIO in a room where people congregate and watch everyone find a new way to use it.

Pause, Record & Watch TV

Many AIOs feature built-in TV tuners, which let you connect a satellite, cable, or antenna to them to record your favorite shows and movies, pause live TV, and rewind to catch that great play you missed while grabbing more nachos.

**Almost Cordless**

AIOs only require a single power cable to power the computer and display. Add a wireless mouse and keyboard (standard on some AIOs) and connect to your network with Wi-Fi to banish cable clutter for good.

Video Chat-Ready

With integrated front-facing Web cams on most AIOs, setting up a video chat is as simple as ringing up someone distant and having a conversation. Don't forget to smile.

Expansion Opportunities

AIOs typically feature several connectivity ports, including (but not limited to) USB, audio line output, audio line input, HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface), and a multi-card reader, making it easy to connect peripherals and devices such as digital cameras, camcorders, MP3 players, speakers systems, your HDTV, and more.

**Upgrade Options**

It's true, AIOs are generally composed of notebook components, but that doesn't mean you can't make some performance upgrades down the road. For the most part, you can still upgrade your AIO's system memory and storage drive.

Bring The Web To Any Room

Imagine having access to millions of recipes and online coupons in the kitchen, streaming video and social networking in your living room, or having your music playlists and email inbox at your bedside, all thanks to the versatile AIO.

**Built-In Speakers**

With speakers generally built into the bezels of AIOs, you can realize the full entertainment potential of the system right out of the box.

Sleek Designs

Most AIOs are built to be in places where people gather, not hidden away in an office. As such, they generally feature clean designs, a tasteful color palette, and stylish accents that make them an aesthetic fit for any room.

What You Can Do With A Laptop

Making a case for a modern laptop's worth isn't too difficult. Beyond the convenience offered portability-wise, laptop form-factors have steadily thinned, battery life extended, power and performance increased, and number of interesting applications that users can execute multiplied. The following are examples of interesting things users can do with a new laptop.



Video Chat From A Taxi Cab

A laptop that integrates fast mobile broadband connectivity can connect to the Internet wherever coverage is provided. That now includes dozens of U.S. metropolitan areas.

Thus, if you're, say, en route to a make-or-break meeting with potential investors in your burgeoning three-man startup, you can use a laptop's built-in Web cam and the videoconferencing software of your choice to video chat with colleagues back in the office while sitting in the back of a taxi cab to discuss last-minute presentation details.



Laptop

**Access Your Music Here, There & Everywhere**

Another example in which a laptop with mobile broadband connectivity to the Internet can come in handy involves tapping into the convenience that various cloud computing-based services provide, including services that host your personal music libraries in the cloud. So, whether you're at home, the library, work, or in a hotel room, you can log in to the service and start listening to your favorite song on the laptop any time the mood strikes you. The same holds true for accessing photos, videos, and documents you're storing in cloud services.

**Wirelessly Stream Video From A Laptop To HDTV**

With a laptop that includes Intel's Wireless Display, a technology also referred to as WiDi and that's included in various laptops powering on a 2nd Generation Intel Core processor, you can wirelessly stream in HD quality whatever is being displayed on the laptop's screen to an HDTV that's equipped with an optional Netgear Push2TV adapter. Thus, after a dinner party with friends, you could comfortably gather everyone in the home-theater room to view photos and videos stored on the laptop that you captured during a recent cross-country roadtrip on the HDTV's larger screen.



COURTESY OF APPLE

Record Your Band's New Songs

The availability of affordable and increasingly easy-to-use audio recording and editing software offering numerous professional-level features has made the recording, editing, and mixing of audio tracks more accessible and easier than ever. Thus, whether you're just jamming or mixing multiple tracks for an album your band intends to self-release, the multi-processing capabilities, ample availability of internal and external hard drive storage, and multiple gigabytes of fast-performing RAM that current laptops provide makes the task a mobile-friendly possibility.

**Watch Movies In 3D**

With a laptop that integrates a 3D-capable display, you can watch 3D-enabled Blu-ray movies (with a 3D Blu-ray optical drive onboard), play 3D games, view online 3D videos, and display photos snapped with a 3D-capable digital camera in up to Full HD quality with attention-grabbing goodness. Further, various laptops integrate technology that can convert 2D content into 3D content, as well as technology that supports connecting a 3D-capable laptop to a 3D-enabled TV to output 3D content.



What You Can Do With A Tablet

Wish you could edit video on your tablet? Create your own music? Blog wherever you want (without a laptop)? As it turns out, you can. These are all activities you can engage in with a tablet and compatible apps. Keep reading to learn about more things you can do with a tablet.



Prove That Greenland Neighbors Iceland

Find yourself in the heat of geography debate? Whip out your trusty tablet, open up the proprietary or third-party roadmap app, zoom in on the North Atlantic Ocean, and compare the locations of Greenland and Iceland. Of course, you can do much more than pinch-and-zoom on a tablet map: You can use a navigation app to follow turn-by-turn directions, find the best public transportation routes, or beat the rush hour slowdowns with an app that predicts traffic patterns.

Tablet



Talk Face-To-Face With Far-Away Friends

Some tablets have built-in Web cams and support video calling (with Wi-Fi or 3G connectivity) so you can chat with (and see) colleagues, friends, and family members over the Internet. Some apps let you host a group video call, which is great for conferencing with co-workers who are working in different states. The best part is that many video calling services are free.



Read Library Books Without Going To The Library

It's no mystery that you can read an ebook on your tablet, but did you know you can likely download text and audio books to your tablet from your local library? When you download the app that supports electronic checkouts and search for the appropriate library branch, you'll be able to read digital books on the tablet interface. If your ebook is already checked out, you can sign up on a waiting list. Many public domain books are available free online in EPUB (electronic publication) format.



Cook Like A Chef

When you're crafting a multi-course dinner for your family, you want to cook a meal that is more than just efficient: You want it to be something everyone remembers. The good news is that there are apps that provide step-by-step recipes. Thanks to your tablet you can browse recipes and ingredients lists by simply swiping your finger across the screen. Plus, your tablet can double as a shopping list that lets you check off each item with a tap.

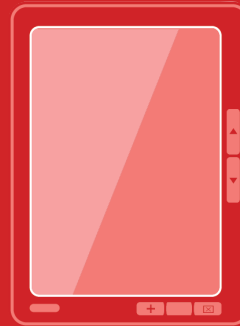
Turn Your Tablet Into A Touchscreen Mouse & Keyboard

If your hand gets tired of using an optical mouse every day, consider downloading an app that lets you utilize your tablet's interface as a virtual keyboard and trackpad. Most peripheral apps connect to your desktop PC over Wi-Fi. Pair one of these apps with a tablet that supports multi-touch gestures, such as the double-finger scroll, and you can browse documents and Web pages without clicking or typing whatsoever. Other apps are designed for use with a home-theater PC or Internet-ready TV, transforming your tablet into a remote control.



What You Can Do With An eReader

The magic of the eReader is that you can carry many books in the space of just one—and that you can access entire bookstores and libraries from almost anywhere. Here are just some of the things you can do with an eReader.



Hold Your Library In Your Hand

You're sitting on a beach, ready to read the biography of a great historical figure, but partway through, you decide you'd rather read that action novel you picked up the other day. Normally you'd have to lug a suitcase through the sand to have that kind of variety, but with an eReader, you have a digital bookcase at your disposal. Read any digital book you own—without leaving the beach.

Get The Newspaper Without Opening The Front Door

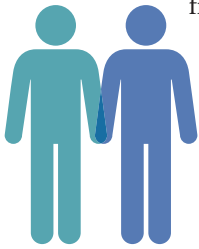
If your morning routine consists of walking outside and searching the bushes for your morning paper, consider the fact that publishers can send newspapers to your eReader wirelessly. Just subscribe to a newspaper (or magazine) of your choice. Now, you can take your time in the morning knowing that the news will be waiting for you right where you expect it.



eReader

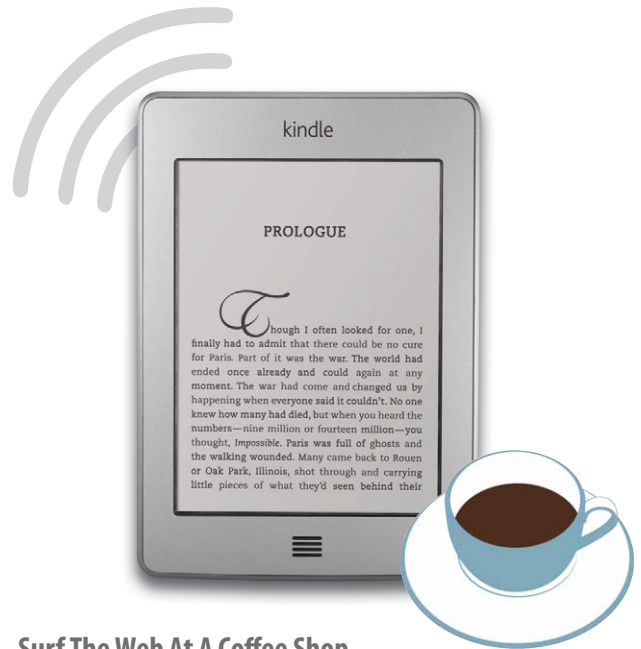
Share A Book With A Friend

Frequent readers are used to having friends ask them for book recommendations and may occasionally lend a copy. With some eReaders, you can lend a book to a friend for a period of time, during which you won't have access to it on your own device. But you don't have to worry about your friend forgetting they borrowed it, because the book is automatically returned when the lending period is up.



Buy A Book In The Great Outdoors

Camping is one of the few ways to experience nature in its purest form, but it's also one of the quietest and most peaceful places to enjoy a good book. And with 3G mobile broadband and/or Wi-Fi connectivity, you can download a book just about anywhere.

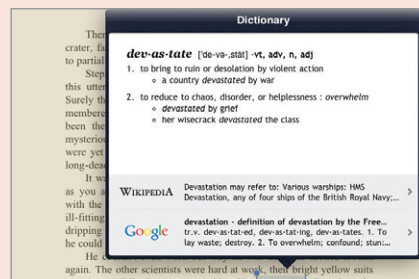


Surf The Web At A Coffee Shop

You're reading your eReader and drinking your coffee when you realize you forgot your tablet at home, but you need to check something online. Some eReaders have Internet browsers that you can use with Wi-Fi or 3G, so you won't miss an email when you're away from your other devices.

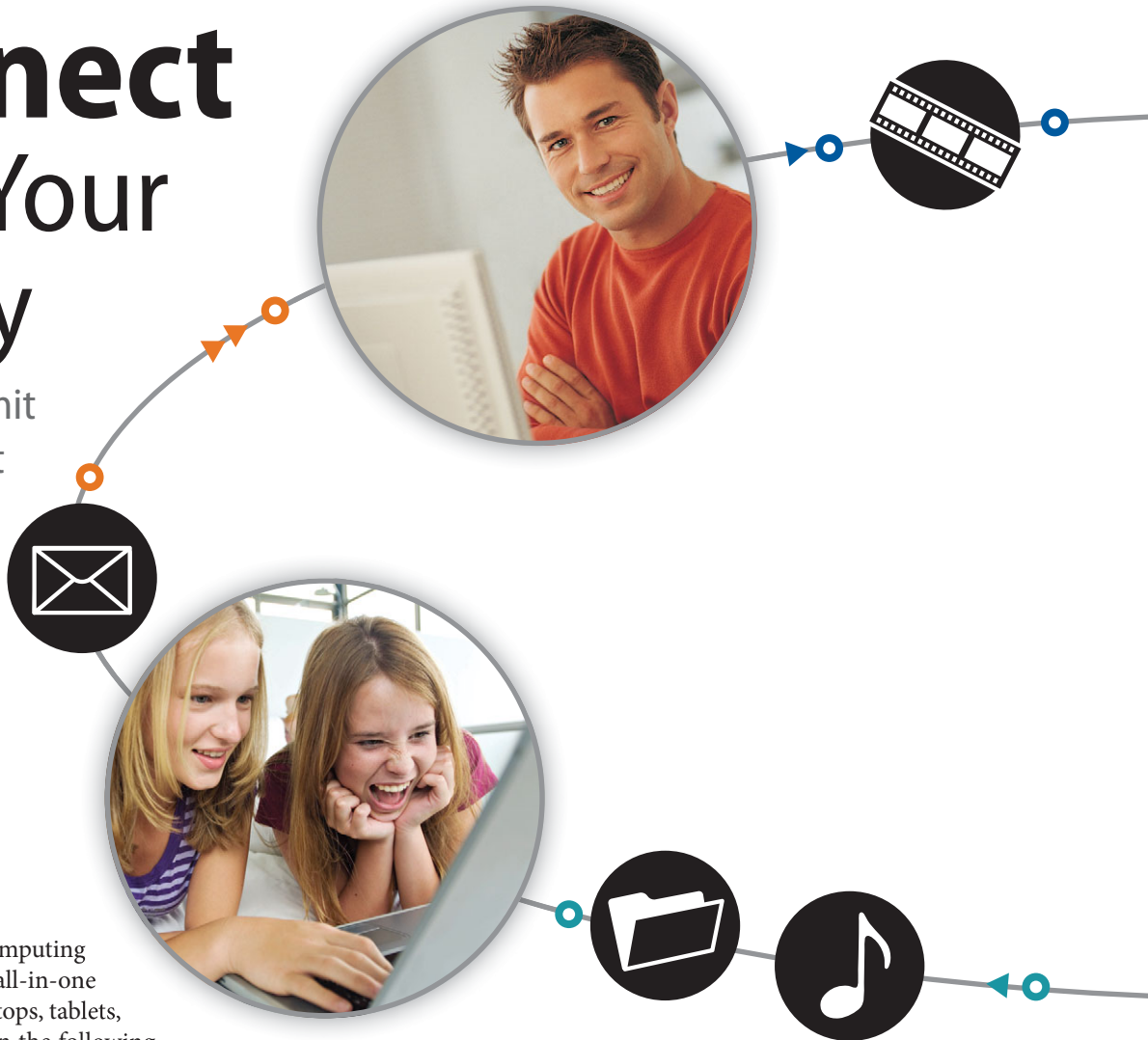
Instantly Look Up "Heliotropism"

One challenge of fully comprehending a book is knowing the definitions of difficult words. For instance, if you're reading a book that uses the term "heliotropism" in reference to leaves and flowers, you might have to skim past it or grab a dictionary. Luckily, most eReaders have built-in dictionaries, so you can look up the word and find out that it simply means, "growth toward the sun," and the mystery is solved.



Connect With Your Family

No Need To Limit Yourself To Just One Device



This issue's Computing Guide covers all-in-one computers, laptops, tablets, and eReaders in the following articles. However, these standalone devices don't necessarily have to stand alone.

Computers and mobile electronics are made to connect to one another. In fact, it's kind of neat the way they complement each other.

A connection can let you transfer files, recharge batteries, and more. You may even have other consumer electronics in your household, such as a TV or wireless headphones, that can enhance your enjoyment of a device even more. All it takes is the right kind of connection.

Bear in mind that there's a lot of overlap in the capabilities of these devices, and that various models will come with different features.

» All-In-Ones

Like traditional desktop PCs, AIOs (all-in-ones) have many ports for connections to various devices. Many AIOs support more types of device cables than typical laptops, although the

latter more often support certain wireless technologies such as Bluetooth and WiMAX.

A home network is a common way to connect each of these devices to each other and to the Internet. All it takes is an inexpensive wireless router, which can accept Wi-Fi and/or Ethernet cable connections from computers and mobile devices.

One smart reason to link a tablet or eReader to your all-in-one PC is to back up its ebooks, photos, music tracks, and videos. A computer generally has much more drive space than a mobile device, so you can offload bulky media files to the PC to make room for new ones on your portable gadget.

As for home-theater devices, you can use an all-in-one as a big-screen video player by connecting it to an HDTV with an HDMI cable.





» Laptops

Wi-Fi networking is built into practically all notebooks, but it isn't the only way to link them to other gizmos. For instance, many laptops have a memory card reader that can access files on a tablet or eReader's microSD (Secure Digital) card.



Besides HDMI, some notebooks can also transmit video to an HDTV over a wireless connection such as Intel's Wireless Display.

Another great idea is to use your notebook as a jukebox by connecting its audio or HDMI output to an A/V (audio/video) receiver and then playing music files. Finally, don't forget family head-to-head gaming using your networked laptop and PC.

» Tablets

A compatible USB cable gives tablets a faster way to move files to and from a laptop or PC. Moreover, USB is additionally useful for recharging many tablets' and eReaders' batteries.



With the right app, your tablet may be able to use your Wi-Fi network to video chat or to stream media files from your laptop or all-in-one. You may even be able to send documents and photos to a printer attached to a PC or your router.

» eReaders

Electronic book readers may use your Wi-Fi network to download new ebooks. In addition, many let you install reader apps on your computer, tablet, or phone, so you can keep reading an ebook even when your eReader is recharging on a USB port. ■



Meet Your Match

AIO PCs, Laptops, Desktops & eReaders

Thanks to AIO (all-in-one) computers, notebooks, tablets, and eReaders, you have a lot of choices when it comes to computing devices. Here, we'll examine the top features you should keep in mind when shopping.



AIO PCs

- With all-in-one computers, you can choose touch-screen or non-touchscreen models. Touchscreens are handy for kitchens and other areas where you prefer not to use a keyboard.
- Touchscreen models typically also include a mouse and a keyboard.
- Many AIOs support higher capacity memory than they have, which means you can upgrade the memory later. Check to see how much memory is in the AIO, as well as how much you can add down the road.
- Some models include a Blu-ray/DVD drive, which could come in handy if you want your AIO to double as an entertainment system.



Laptops

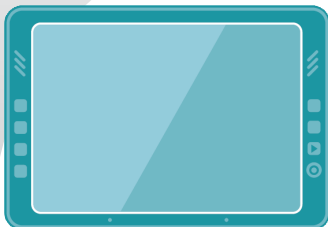
- Laptops are bigger (14 inches and above) and more powerful than netbooks. Netbooks are usually more portable than laptops and sometimes offer better battery life.
- Laptops generally offer a built-in DVD burner, so you can load media and copy content onto writeable DVDs.
- Gamers should consider a laptop with dedicated graphics memory to provide them with solid performance when playing games.
- If you need to travel with a lot of personal files, such as music, digital images, or documents, look at laptops that offer plenty of storage capacity. Many laptops boast 320GB or more of hard drive space.





Tablets

- There are a number of operating systems for tablets, including Android, iOS, and Windows. Test out the different operating systems to see which interface and features you prefer.
- Tablets come with a limited amount of internal memory. If you need to store many songs, videos, or documents on the tablet, you may consider models with larger internal storage, such as 32GB, to provide space for all the files you need.
- Some tablets are available with built-in 3G or 4G mobile broadband data connections, as well as Wi-Fi. If you always need Internet access, look for a model that comes with a mobile broadband data plan. (Mobile broadband plans require paid subscriptions.)



eReaders

- eReaders are available in LCD (full color) and E-Ink (black and white). If you want to use your eReader for more than reading, such as browsing the Web, you'll want an LCD eReader. E-ink is generally believed to be easier on the eyes, so it's ideal for those who read often.
- Some eReaders are also capable of using apps, so you can download programs, such as games or productivity tools, that will enhance the value of your eReader.
- To let you download books on the go, most eReaders offer Wi-Fi and/or 3G connectivity. Look for a model with built-in Internet access if you want easy access to new books.





Apple iMac

\$1,199 MSRP

www.apple.com

SKU: 2658077

Apple iMac

The Apple iMac runs Mac OS X Snow Leopard and offers a fundamentally different experience than Windows-based all-in-ones as a result. This unit features a 21.5-inch widescreen display that supports a 1,920 x 1,080 resolution. Intel's 2.5GHz Core i5 processor gives this system 4-way processing and Turbo Boost for extra speed when you need it most. It includes 4GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) memory, and a 500GB hard drive stores your applications, files, music, photos, and more. A built-in DVD±RW/CD-RW drive handles optical media such as CDs and DVDs. The

AMD Radeon HD 6750M graphic processor handles video processing and gaming tasks. Other features include a built-in Web cam for

FaceTime HD, an Apple wireless keyboard, Apple Magic Mouse, integrated 802.11n Wi-Fi, and FireWire 800 and USB 2.0 ports. ■

Tech Tips

The Apple iMac may be a change of pace for those more accustomed to Windows' way of doing things, but Apple's design philosophy puts user experience on a pedestal. The attractive hardware is incredibly functional, and the software offers the same balance between form and function.

- iTunes organizes and transfers music to your iPhone, iPod, and iPad, but also integrates with OS X applications such as iPhoto and iMovie to get your media wherever you want it to go.
- Time Machine is the built-in backup suite that lets you recover individual files, multiple files, or the entire system based on incremental backups that occur automatically every hour.
- AirPrint is a feature which lets you automatically connect to printers that also support AirPrint to wirelessly print, with very little user input. Ask a Best Buy representative about printers that support AirPrint.



Dell Inspiron \$849.99

www.dell.com

SKU: 2602476

Dell Inspiron

"Touch, play, watch, and share." That's exactly what Dell encourages you to do with your videos, music, photos, ebooks, and other media on its Inspiron all-in-one's 23-inch 1080p backlit touchscreen via finger touches and swipes. Thanks to the system's included wireless keyboard and mouse, setup only requires plugging in one cord, which you can do in a family room, home office, or home theater due to the system's highly flexible space-saving design and streamlined appearance.

Powering on an 2.4GHz quad-core AMD Athlon II X4 processor, ATI Radeon HD 4270 graphics, 6GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate)

RAM, and Windows 7 Premium Edition 64-bit, the system supports multiple peripheral connections and music, photo, video, and document transfers to and from a 1TB (terabyte) hard drive via six USB 2.0 ports and 7-in-1 media card reader. A built-in 2MP (megapixel) Web cam, 4W stereo speakers, and included Skype software, meanwhile, enable videoconferencing, while an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) output allows for connecting the Inspiron to an HDTV for movie watching. Integrated wireless and wired networking provide Internet connectivity, while an 8X DVD+RW/CD-RW drive lets you burn home videos to discs in a hurry. ■

Tech Tips

Ease of use and adaptability are dominant themes with the Inspiron all-in-one, which grants users the means to use such software as the following:

- TouchCam, StickyNotes, and Cyberlink YouPaint to edit and upload photos to social networking sites, write and type notes and messages, and play touch-based games on the system's touchscreen.
- Dell Stage Remote to use a Dell smartphone or tablet as remote control for the Inspiron all-in-one.
- SyncUP powered by Nero to exchange photos, music, and documents among supported devices on the same Wi-Fi network or via a SyncUP online cloud computing storage account.



Gateway One

\$599.99 MSRP

www.gateway.com

SKU: 2633042

Gateway One

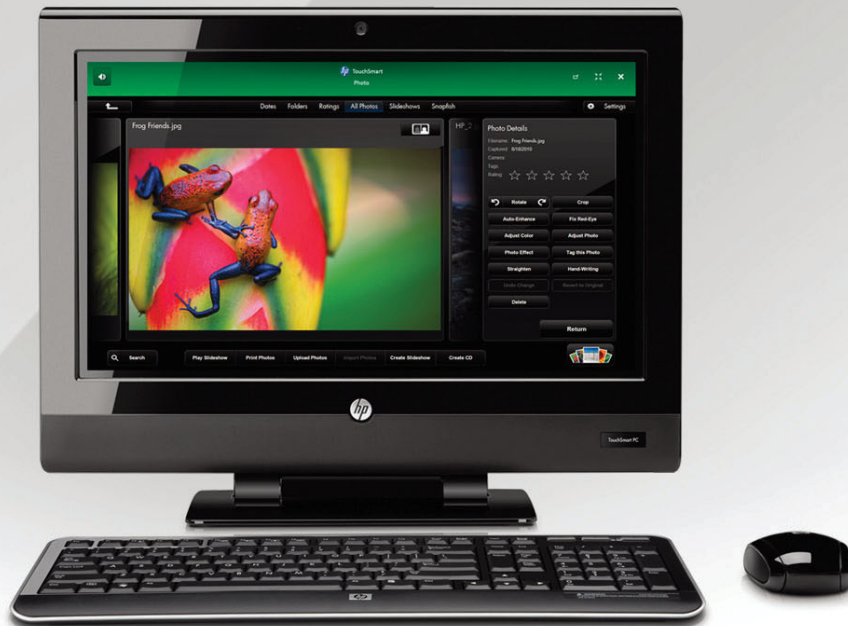
One are the days when owning a desktop PC meant you would need to dedicate the majority of your office space to your computer, its peripherals, and all the cables that came with it. The Gateway One ZX6961-UB21P is a touch-based slim PC that is ready to entertain you. In fact, it has an interface similar to a large tablet screen on which your fingertips can play.

With the processing power of the dual-core Intel Pentium G620 and 4GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) RAM, you'll be able to multitask without a second thought. Plus, 500GB of storage will afford you plenty of space for your photo collections, MP3s, and more. The 23-inch touch-screen LCD offers Full HD with a resolution of 1,920 x 1,080. It features Gateway's Ultrabright screen with an antireflective layer and high contrast. ■

Tech Tips

You don't have to try hard to realize the benefits of an all-in-one. Consider the pros below before you buy a new PC.

- The Gateway One supports what are called "touch-powered social apps," which let you access multimedia such as MP3s, photo collections, and videos with a tap of your finger.
- If you're looking for a PC that is attractive enough to be a conversation piece in your living room, the Gateway One is a solid choice with its glossy monitor and soft round edges.
- An all-in-one computer reduces the cable clutter that you would normally have to manage with a standard PC. Add a wireless printer and you're practically cable-free.



HP TouchSmart

\$759.99

www.hp.com

SKU: 2634175

HP TouchSmart

If you need to save desktop space or simply want a sleeker PC, the HP TouchSmart all-in-one computer is one option that combines the tower and monitor into a single, standalone unit. It's a compact package with a variety of helpful features.

The TouchSmart AIO has 6GB of memory, which is expandable up to 8GB; a 1TB (terabyte) hard drive, and an AMD Athlon II X4 quad-core processor. It features built-in Wi-Fi, six USB 2.0 ports, a Web cam with microphone, a media card reader, and a DVD/CD drive and burner. The monitor is a 20-inch touchscreen LCD, and HP includes a wireless keyboard and optical mouse.

Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit is preinstalled, as well as the Starter version of Microsoft Office 2010, which can be upgraded to the full version with an activation key (sold separately). It also has CyberLink DVD Suite Deluxe. And with the 1TB hard drive, you'll have plenty of storage space for all of the programs and applications you need. ■

Tech Tips

All-in-one computers pack a lot of hardware and tools into a compact design. HP's TouchSmart AIO has a few unique features, as well as extra accessories that will customize it to fit your needs.

- After you set up your computer, you should calibrate the touchscreen and make sure the resolution is correct. This will ensure touch responsiveness and give you the best possible video quality.
- HP's LightScribe technology lets you print label information directly onto compatible discs without needing to purchase an additional kit and adhesive labels.
- Extra memory, an external hard drive, and other optional accessories can make this AIO even more powerful.



Sony VAIO

\$999.99

www.sony.com

SKU: 2710174

Sony VAIO

Picture a big, beautiful touchscreen that's actually a PC. What's more, it's just about cable-free. Sign us up, please.

This intriguing Sony VAIO VPCL222FX/B all-in-one centers on a 24-inch, LED (light-emitting diode)-backlit touchscreen. For high-definition entertainment, it comes with Full HD, 1080p resolution, plus HD audio with Dolby Home Theater and S-Force Front Surround 3D support. And, of course, you can tilt it as you like.

This VAIO is wireless in all the right ways, such as its advanced Bluetooth and Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n networking support. It even one-ups tablets in the usability department with its wireless laser mouse and cord-free keyboard.

Underpinning all this is an Intel Core i3-2310M dual-core processor. It supports HyperThreading, so it acts like a quad-core with optimized software. Built into the CPU is Intel's HD Graphics 3000, which accelerates HD video and other multimedia. The 2.1GHz chip is backed up by 4GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) memory.

Windows 7 Home Premium runs on the 500GB SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) hard drive with 7,200rpm performance. There's also a DVD/CD burner to make your media files portable. An HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) port lets you send visual spectacles to a big screen, too. Finally, an Energy Star rating is reassurance that this VAIO is as green as it is compelling. ■

Tech Tips

Get the most out of your new Sony all-in-one with these useful pointers.

- As you set up your new Sony VAIO all-in-one, give some thought to what its Exmor Web cam will be able to see behind you as you video chat.
- The Bluetooth in this Sony supports high-quality audio. Add some compatible wireless stereo speakers and/or a headset for cable-free enjoyment.
- This VAIO's touchscreen is also a 1080p-capable video display. Buy some screen cleaning wipes that will safely remove fingerprints without leaving scratches.



Toshiba DX1215-D2101

\$934.99 MSRP

www.toshiba.com

SKU: 2710156

Toshiba DX1215-D2101

Toshiba's DX1215-D2101 all-in-one Desktop is filled with features that take advantage of today's newest hardware. For example, you'll enjoy Bluetooth connectivity, USB 3.0 transfer speeds, and Dolby Advanced Audio.

The space-saving all-in-one from Toshiba is built using Intel's dual-core I5-2410M processor, which operates at 2.3GHz. The chip also provides you with Intel HD graphics that support up to 1080p (1,920 x 1,080) resolution. If you want an all-in-one that can double as an entertainment system, you'll like the 21.5-inch widescreen, TruBrite LCD and built-in DVD SuperMulti drive. It also features a touchscreen display, so

you can intuitively operate the all-in-one.

Multitaskers will enjoy the 4GB of RAM, while those with large digital image, music, or video collections will appreciate the system's 1TB (terabyte) of hard drive space. For Internet connectivity, Toshiba offers 802.11b/g/n for wireless access, as well as Gigabyte Ethernet for wired connections. A built-in Web cam and microphone let you video chat and videoconference with others, and a memory card reader allows you to transfer images and other files stored on your digital camera, smartphone, or digital camcorder. The all-in-one's USB 3.0 port allows for transfers that are up to 10 times as fast as USB 2.0 (there are also four USB 2.0 ports). ■

Tech Tips

Toshiba's all-in-one includes a number of helpful features that enhance the overall value of the system. Here, we'll provide some advice about how to use them.

- The Eco Utility lets you quickly adjust the power plan of the system to maximize battery life. Select one of the preconfigured Eco modes to reduce the power usage of your all-in-one.
- Invest in an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) cable, and you can connect a portable gaming system to Toshiba's all-in-one
- With the touchscreen display, you can use gestures, such as a finger pinch for zooming, to control the all-in-one. Another common gesture is to drag-and-drop (hold a finger over a file and move it to where you want).

**Apple MacBook Air**

\$1,199 MSRP
www.apple.com
SKU: 3109047

Apple MacBook Air

Mobility is king with the MacBook Air, but performance comes in at a very close second. This MacBook Air has an 11.6-inch LED (light-emitting diode)-backlit screen that supports a 1,366 x 768 resolution. At 0.7 inches thick and just 2.4 pounds, it's one of the thinnest and lightest notebooks you'll ever use. Peel back that thin aluminum shell and you'll find a 1.6GHz Intel Core i5 processor with 4-way computing and Turbo Boost technology, which gives the system an extra speed boost when you really need it.

This unit features 4GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) memory and 128GB of flash storage for music, photos, files, and applications. Intel's integrated HD 3000 graphics processor handles video processing

and some light gaming. A Thunderbolt port and a pair of USB 2.0 ports stand in for data transferring tasks and connecting peripherals. Other features of the MacBook Air include

an integrated FaceTime camera and omnidirectional mic; 802.11n Wi-Fi; and Apple's software suite that consists of iLife, iTunes, FaceTime, Photo Booth, and more. ■

Tech Tips

The MacBook Air comes preloaded with Mac OS X Lion, which is fundamentally different from Windows. But don't fret: Apple's OS X is designed to be approachable and fun to use.

- The 128GB flash-based storage drive may be smaller than you're used to seeing, even in notebooks, but this solid-state drive lets the MacBook Air boot, load apps, and move files incredibly quickly.
- The battery in the MacBook Air is non-user-replaceable, so to make sure it lasts a long time, avoid completely draining it and develop a routine of partially draining and fully recharging the battery on a regular basis.
- To maintain its svelte profile, the MacBook Air lacks an optical drive. Remedy that with the MacBook Air SuperDrive (\$79), an external USB-based optical drive that lets the MacBook Air read and write DVDs and CDs.



Dell Inspiron R

\$629.99

www.dell.com

SKU: 3146065

Dell Inspiron

Flexibility is the name of the game with the Dell Inspiron R, both in terms of the power and design options it provides. Beyond embedding Intel WiDi technology (Wireless Display; separate adapter required) to stream HD-quality video to an HDTV, the laptop integrates Intel 4G WiMAX technology (separate service plan required), providing wireless Web connectivity at next-gen mobile broadband speed. Design-wise, you can personalize the Inspiron R with one of more than 20 swappable cover lids (starting at \$29.99 each) featuring modern, attention-grabbing designs from Switch by Design Studio.

Measuring just 1.2 inches thin and weighing 7.2 pounds, the Inspiron R includes Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit and a 2.1GHz 2nd Generation Intel Core i3 processor. Included Intel

3000 graphics and 4GB of dual-channel DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) memory, meanwhile, make viewing HD video accompanied by SRS Premium Sound HD audio output from stereo speakers possible on the laptop's 17.3-inch widescreen LED (light-emitting diode) display featuring TrueLife technology producing striking clarity.

Elsewhere, an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) output enables connecting the laptop to an HDTV, while three USB 2.0 ports and an 8-in-1 media reader provide further connectivity. Networking options include integrated Wireless-N, Ethernet, and Bluetooth, while a 500GB SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) hard drive provides ample storage for your photos, videos, music, and documents. A 1MP (megapixel) HD Web cam enables videoconferencing,

while a multiform, dual-layer DVD+RW/CD-RW drive provides data-burning options. ■

Tech Tips

With Dell's new generation of Inspiron R laptops, you'll get new features and improved stated performance such as:

- 19% faster multitasking, 2.3 times faster graphics, 4.6 times faster HD video transfers to portable devices, and 4.5 times faster HD video uploads to YouTube than previously.
- Dell Stage Software to effortlessly move among your music, videos, photos, and apps via a movie reel-like user interface.
- The choice of more than 20 interchangeable laptop lids that are "pop, click, switch" easy to swap out.

**HP Pavilion**

\$1,099.99 MSRP

www.hp.com

SKU: 2821755

HP Pavilion

HP's Pavilion dv7-6195us is a laptop designed for people who need high-performance features in a portable form. It's an on-the-go processing machine with a steel gray aluminum alloy finish that's both powerful and stylish.

This Pavilion laptop has speed and memory to spare. It is thin at 1.4 inches and features a 17.3-inch LED (light-emitting diode) HD display. It sports an Intel Core i7 processor with Turbo Boost technology, a 1TB (terabyte) hard drive, and 8GB of memory that can be expanded up to 16GB. It also has 1GB of video memory and Radeon HD 6770M onboard graphics, which is great for running intense programs and applications or watching HD video. For

inputs, this laptop has two USB 3.0 and two USB 2.0 ports. And the built-in Wi-Fi adapter supports 802.11b/g/n.

HP's Pavilion laptop has Windows 7 Home Premium and other software,

including Adobe Reader and Microsoft Office Starter 2010. It includes burning software for use with the DVD Super-Multi drive, which also supports Blu-ray Disc playback. ■

Tech Tips

The HP Pavilion also has a few extra features that help protect it and improve the overall experience. And there are always additional accessories to consider.

- For added security, the Pavilion has a built-in fingerprint scanner so you can make sure no one else has access to your stored data and programs.
- Intel's WiDi (Wireless Display) technology lets you wirelessly view video and photos as well as listen to music from your laptop on a television using an optional adapter.
- If you prefer a mouse and keyboard to a laptop touchpad, you can always purchase them separately. And a solid case or laptop bag is important for protecting your computer and its internal components.



HP Pavilion G

www.hp.com

HP Pavilion G

This laptop won't break the bank, but it has the power and features many users need on a day-to-day basis. The HP Pavilion G series typically includes dual- (or more) core processor and plenty of memory for surfing the Web, running office programs, watching videos, or editing photos. Speaking of video, the laptop has built-in Wi-Fi and an Ethernet port, which means you can connect the laptop directly to your home router with an Ethernet cable or connect to the router wirelessly. The wireless connection is fast enough to easily support streaming video to your laptop.

Internal storage is an important advantage that laptops have over tablets, so you can expect your Pavilion G laptop to offer 320GB of hard drive space (or more). The laptop also comes with a DVD player/burner (another feature that a tablet lacks) and a media card reader. Web cams are also typical. If you chat with friends and co-workers online, the Web cam will come in handy. Of course, one of the most important features is the screen. With bright, 14-inch and larger displays, the Pavilion G has what you need. ■

Tech Tips

Your new laptop has plenty of new features to explore. Here are some tips to get you started.

- If the laptop doesn't power on right away, press the Power button again. A light press on any laptop's Power button might be enough.
- Your new laptop has a bright, crisp display. If it seems dim when you first power on the laptop, you may need to adjust the display settings. Click the AMD icon (or a display icon) at the bottom right of the screen to open and adjust the display settings.
- Although today's laptops are more durable than they were years ago, your new HP laptop still needs some protection when you travel. Invest in a laptop case or sleeve to protect your PC.

**Lenovo IdeaPad**

\$629.99

www.lenovo.com

SKU: 2731265

Lenovo IdeaPad

A little goes a long way with this attractive IdeaPad from Lenovo.

A mere 5.3 pounds and 1.3 inches thick, the IdeaPad V570-1066A9U is made for both work and relaxation. It has a 15.6-inch, LED (light-emitting diode)-backlit widescreen that's capable of showing 720p HD video. There's also an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) output, so you can experience your entertainment on the big screen.

Powering all this is the Intel HD 3000 graphics built into the Core i5-2410M processor. It's a dual-

core CPU that can sometimes act as a quad-core, owing to Intel's HyperThreading technology. The 2.3GHz processor can also jump to 2.9GHz when needed, thanks to Intel's Turbo Boost feature.

A 640GB hard drive comes loaded with Windows 7 Home Premium. It's the 64-bit version, so it can fully utilize the computer's 6GB of RAM.

With other popular features such as Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n networking, a DVD burner, a 2-megapixel Web cam, and a memory card reader, this IdeaPad is one great idea. ■

Tech Tips

This Lenovo is a well-appointed laptop for its price. Here's a trio of tips to get the most from it.

- Buy an activation key to unlock Microsoft Office Starter 2010, which is already on the hard drive.
- Thanks to WiDi (Wireless Display) support, you can send HD video wirelessly to your TV with an optional adapter.
- You'll definitely want a protective notebook bag to keep your new investment safe in transit.

Samsung SF511-A03

\$849.99 MSRP

www.samsung.com

SKU: 3006342



Samsung SF511-A03

Samsung designed the SF511-A03 with a curved exterior and chrome accents, so it's one of the more stylish systems we've seen. Samsung also breaks the mold with a sleep mode that uses zero power when you shut the lid. When you want to use the notebook again, just open the lid and the computer will load what you had opened previously in three seconds.

This notebook features an Intel Core i5 processor with two cores that run at 2.3GHz and a maximum Turbo Boost frequency of 2.9GHz. The speedy system also includes a 640GB hard drive and Intel's HD graphics. It offers a 15.6-inch LED (light-emitting diode) screen, which is backlit

to provide you with the highest detail and accurate color.

In terms of multimedia, the SF511-A03 comes with a 1.3MP (megapixel) Web cam, a DVD burner, and a 4-in-1 media card reader. You'll also be able to connect to other displays through the laptop's HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) and VGA (Video Graphics Array) outputs if you want to see the laptop's screen on a bigger monitor. Internet connectivity is provided through a built-in Ethernet port and 802.11b/g/n wireless. For extended battery life, Samsung includes a 6-cell lithium polymer battery that provides up to 8.5 hours of portable life and has up to 1,000 charge cycles. ■

Tech Tips

The Samsung SF511-A03 offers plenty of features that you'll want to check out.

- The laptop's built-in Wi-Fi can be used to connect to networks at home, in the office, or at shops that provide Wi-Fi hotspots.
- The built-in trackpad is great for working on the go, but if you need precise control, check out a Samsung wireless mouse that you can stow in your laptop bag.
- Utilize the USB 3.0 with compatible storage devices, and you'll benefit from a transfer speed that's up to 10 times as fast as USB 2.0

**Sony VAIO Z Series**

\$1,999.99 MSRP

www.sony.com

SKU: 3196041

Sony VAIO Z Series

The ultraportable aspect of the Sony VAIO laptop is only skin-deep: This 0.7-inch-thick, 2.6-pound laptop has features you'd expect to find on a much larger laptop.

There's a 13.1-inch LED (light-emitting diode)-backlit display that supports a 1,600 x 900 resolution. The Intel Core i5-2410M processor has a 2.3GHz base clock, but Intel's Turbo Boost Technology increases the clock speed to up to 2.9GHz when running demanding applications, and 4-way processing makes multitasking easy on this Sony VAIO.

The laptop features 4GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) system memory; a 128GB solid-state drive for storing your applications, files, and media; and Intel's HD Graphics 3000 graphics processor, which

handles HD video and light gaming applications. This laptop also features a built-in HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) output port, so you can connect it to an HDTV to share your videos, music, and photos with everyone in the room.

Other features include the exclusive Power Media Dock, which is an external slot-loading optical drive that also includes AMD's Radeon HD 6650M graphics processor for improved HD video playback and gaming performance; another HDMI output; a VGA (Video Graphics Array) output; Ethernet port; and USB 3.0 and USB 2.0 ports. The VAIO also has 802.11n Wi-Fi, a fingerprint reader, Bluetooth, and a built-in Web cam. ■

Tech Tips

The Sony VAIO Z Series offers several convenient features and runs Microsoft's Windows 7 Professional, which will appeal to business users and advanced home users.

- Windows 7 Professional supports Windows XP mode, which lets you run business applications that may not be compatible with the newer operating system.
- Backing up your system is easy in all versions of Win7, but the Professional version enables users to back the system up on a home or business network.
- With access to an onboard HDMI port, make sure you buy a spare HDMI cable so you can quickly and easily expand your view on an HDTV, whenever and wherever you happen to be.

**Toshiba Satellite**

\$857.99 MSRP

www.toshiba.com

SKU: 2809404

Toshiba Satellite

This laptop's slim dimensions belie its power and feature set. At just 5.4 pounds and with a 1.4-inch-thick body, the Satellite P745-S4217 from Toshiba is ready to go wherever you want and do whatever you want.

Its 14-inch TruBrite widescreen display is compact enough to keep the laptop portable, and yet its resolution is high enough to natively support 720p HD video content. The screen also benefits from LED (light-emitting diode) backlighting, which maintains high levels of brightness even as it conserves battery power. You'll get nearly six hours of usage between charges, Toshiba says, thanks to an included 6-cell battery.

As you open the Satellite P745-S4217's case—this one comes in Toshiba's Fusion X2 finish in Platinum—

you'll discover a multi-touch touchpad. It supports gestures such as swipe and pinch, so you can rotate photos, zoom maps, and more. Your media files will reside on a spacious 640GB hard drive with automatic impact protection.

Nearby, a BD-ROM combo drive also serves as a DVD/CD burner with LabelFlash disc labeling. Powering the drive's video capabilities are the Intel HD Graphics built into the Core i5-2410M processor (2.3GHz; 2.9GHz with Turbo Boost). Even movie soundtracks will impress through the 2-channel Harmon Kardon speakers and Dolby Advanced Audio technology.

Toshiba preloads this Satellite with Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit, along with 6GB of DDR3 (double-data-rate 3) memory for smooth multitasking. The laptop is ready for wireless networking whether you're on the

go (with WiMAX 4G wireless broadband support) or working/playing at home (with 802.11b/g/n). ■

Tech Tips

Toshiba's Satellite P745-S4217 does a great job of outreach to your favorite devices and media.

- Fire up Corel WinDVD BD, and kick back with a good movie on Blu-ray Disc.
- The USB Sleep-and-Charge feature lets you recharge mobile devices via USB, even when your laptop is in sleep mode.
- The P745-S4217 can send video to your big-screen HDTV with either an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) cable or an Intel Wireless Display adapter, both sold separately.



Toshiba Satellite C650 Series

Starting below \$400
www.toshiba.com

Toshiba Satellite C650 Series

If you're looking for value, Toshiba's Satellite C650 series is an excellent place to start. The Satellite C pairs a strong processor with solid built-in graphics to deliver performance that will see you through daily activities, such as surfing the Web, watching video over the Internet, or running office programs. In fact, your new laptop likely includes Microsoft Office Starter 10, which lets you try (and, if you like it, buy) the popular office suite.

Other noteworthy features include a widescreen display that has a built-in Web cam. That's important for users who want to chat with family and friends. Of course, you'll need to be connected to the Internet to chat (or surf the Web), so the laptop includes

an Ethernet port and built-in Wi-Fi connectivity. If you have a home wireless network, you can connect the Satellite C to the network as soon as you pull the laptop from the box. It's also

worth noting that the laptop has plenty of hard drive space (at least 320GB), which means you have all the room you'll need for storing music, videos, photos, and documents. ■

Tech Tips

Laptops are easy to use these days, but these tips will help you have an even better experience with your new Satellite.

- If you are new to Windows 7, click the Start button and then click Help And Support. You'll find information for new users, including a "How To Get Started With Your Computer" tutorial.
- Charge your laptop battery frequently. When a laptop sits for long periods of time without charging, the lifespan of the battery may diminish.
- Consider a laptop sleeve, which is a thin, padded bag designed for laptops. It will protect your laptop from scratches and bumps when you leave it on the coffee table or desk.

**Acer Iconia TAB**

\$449.99 MSRP

www.acer.com

SKU: 2512059

Acer Iconia TAB

The 10.1-inch Iconia TAB A Series A500-10S16u tablet from Acer runs Android's Honeycomb (3.0) operating system, so you'll enjoy all of the popular apps and services available for Android. Other goodies include rear-facing and front-facing cameras, a WXGA (Wide Extended Graphics Array) HD touchscreen display, and Dolby Mobile Technology dual speakers.

The Iconia TAB can power through tough tasks because it features Nvidia's Tegra 2 dual core mobile processor, which includes optimization for Adobe Flash playback and the ability to reach console-quality gaming frame rates. You can even connect the Iconia to your HDTV, using

the tablet's built-in HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) port, to play back video at 1080p on your home-theater system.

Acer includes 1GB of built-in memory for quick multitasking, and the Iconia TAB features 16GB of internal storage, so you can travel with your personal documents, music, and images. There's 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi for wireless Internet connectivity, and you'll have plenty of ways to transfer downloaded files on and off the Iconia, including a standard USB port, microSD slot, and Bluetooth. If you want to watch video on the tablet, you'll enjoy the sizeable (10.1-inch) screen. ■

Tech Tips

- To help you transfer files on and off of the Android tablet, Acer includes a USB cable that you connect between the tablet and a Windows PC. You'll just need to download the USB driver from Acer's Web site to allow the PC to access the tablet.
- If the signal is weak from the Wi-Fi network, try using your tablet in a location that's closer to the Wi-Fi router.
- Touchscreens can be damaged by scratches, so it's a good idea to invest in a screen protector that you can apply to protect the screen.



Amazon Kindle Fire

\$199 MSRP

www.amazon.com

Amazon Kindle Fire

Building on the technology behind its Kindle eReaders, Amazon recently launched a tablet: the Kindle Fire. With a 7-inch color screen and support for streaming video over your Wi-Fi network, the Fire is ready to entertain you. It supports digital books, audio books, music, and other content. And, Amazon provides free online storage for any content you buy from it. You can also store photos, music, and more on the Fire's 8GB of built-in storage. Built-in speakers let you share the fun with your friends, and a stereo audio jack lets you plug in your favorite pair of headphones.

Of course, any tablet worth its salt can browse the Internet, and the Fire is no exception. In fact, it has a special Internet browser, Amazon Silk, which

uses cloud computing to provide extra-fast Web browsing. The Fire supports charging from a wall outlet (via an adapter) or your computer (via a USB cable that can also transfer files

from your PC). The battery provides 7.5 hours of video playback and eight hours of reading (when the wireless settings are turned off), making it an excellent travel companion. ■

Tech Tips

The more you use your new Kindle Fire, the more features you'll discover. Keep these tips in mind as you explore your new tablet.

- The Kindle Fire's touchscreen supports two-touch interaction, which means you can not only swipe and tap with a single finger, but also pinch and expand your fingers for easier navigation.
- Opening email attachments (including Microsoft Word documents and PDFs) is easy, thanks to special functionality built into the Kindle Fire.
- A sleeve protects your Kindle Fire when it's not in use. You can easily slip the Fire out of the sleeve when you're ready to use it.

Apple iPad 2

\$499 MSRP

www.apple.com

SKU: 1945531



Apple iPad 2

The latest Apple iPad is everything the original iPad was, just thinner, lighter, and more powerful. This version features a dual-core A5 processor under the hood that is capable of faster graphics and a smoother overall experience.

The 9.7-inch LED (light-emitting diode)-backlit display features in-plane switching technology, which means that it looks great whether viewed straight on or at an angle. The display also auto-rotates to accommodate portrait or landscape orientation. The multi-touch display lets you intuitively navigate among apps, browse the Web, and perform multi-finger gestures such as pinch-to-zoom and more.

This version of the iPad 2 relies solely on built-in 802.11n Wi-Fi for network connections. A 16GB flash storage system provides space for hundreds of apps, photos, and media files. The iPad 2 also supports Bluetooth 2.1 wireless technology. A built-in accelerometer, three-axis gyroscope, and compass combine to add new layers of interaction and enhance games, maps, and other apps.

The latest iPad also features both front- and back-facing cameras, which let you chat with others face-to-face using FaceTime video calling. ■

Tech Tips

The Apple iPad uses iOS 4, the same operating system used in Apple's iPhone. Likewise, the iPad has access to the Apple App Store, and there's a catalog of more than 100,000 apps designed specifically for the iPad.

- When using the front-facing camera to chat with someone using the FaceTime app, try tapping the camera swap icon in the lower-right corner to give the person you're talking to a look at your surroundings.
- The Apple iPad supports a feature called AirPrint, which lets you print things from your iPad to an AirPrint-capable printer with minimal effort. Ask your sales associate to show you which printers support AirPrint.
- The Apple Smart Cover (\$39) doesn't just protect the screen, it also acts as a stand, uses magnets for a sure fit every time, and wakes your iPad whenever you remove it. The Smart Cover can also add a splash of color.



Asus Eee Pad
Transformer (16GB)

\$399.99

www.asus.com

SKU: 2475916

Asus Eee Pad Transformer

The Asus Eee Pad Transformer is aptly named because it can fit onto an optional docking station that allows it to turn into a notebook with a full QWERTY keyboard and trackpad. This tablet runs Android's Honeycomb operating system.

This Asus Eee Pad Transformer comes with 16GB of storage, and a 32GB model is also available. Travelers will like that Asus includes a microSD card reader, so they can easily add storage to the tablet. Asus also provides a free one-year subscription to its Unlimited Asus WebStorage so you can upload and download files via the tablet's Internet connection. For powerful performance, there's an Nvidia Tegra 2

(dual-core processor) that is capable of playing games, watching videos, and quickly multitasking.

The Eee Pad Transformer comes with a 1.2MP (megapixel) front-facing camera (for video chat) and 5MP rear

camera. The 10.1-inch screen features a 178-degree viewing angle so you can read the display even if it's not directly facing you. The glass on the screen is also scratch-resistant to protect the display during travel. ■

Tech Tips

- Using the Eee Pad Transformer with the Asus Transformer Keyboard Dock (\$149.99) makes it easier to type, and the dock also adds 16 hours of battery life, as well as gives you more USB and SD (Secure Digital) ports.
- This tablet also supports 10 multiple touch inputs, so you can simultaneously use both hands for on-screen gestures.
- Asus includes a variety of apps, such as MyLibrary (for ebooks) and MyCloud (works with Asus WebStorage), to enhance the value of your system.

**Motorola Xoom**

\$499 MSRP

www.motorola.com

SKU: 1946197

Motorola Xoom

The Motorola Xoom tablet is receiving plenty of attention these days. It runs the Android 3.1 (Honeycomb) operating system, which is taking the smartphone market by storm. And the Xoom is upgradable as new versions of Android appear.

This dark titanium tablet lets you use multi-touch gestures on its oversized 10.1-inch widescreen. You'll appreciate the Xoom's high resolution (1,280 x 800) as you enjoy sharp photos, videos, and games under Nvidia GeForce graphics power.

Nvidia also supplies the Xoom with a dual-core Tegra T20 processor. It leverages 1GB of memory to give you the power to multitask without taking away battery life.

Under demanding conditions, such as video playback or Web browsing over Wi-Fi, battery life is about 10 hours, according to Motorola. For lighter duty, such as MP3 playback, your Xoom can go more than three days between charges, and standby time is up to two weeks.

Motorola made the Xoom easy to carry, weighing 1.5 pounds and measuring just half an inch thick. You'll be able to connect wirelessly to Bluetooth devices and 2.4/5GHz Wi-Fi networks.

Meanwhile, the Xoom's 32GB drive will give you plenty of storage for the video and still pictures you'll capture with its 5MP (megapixel) digital camera, which sports dual LED

(light-emitting diode) flash and digital zoom capability. ■

Tech Tips

A screen like the Xoom's simply begs for visual creativity.

- The Portfolio Case (\$39.99) lets you prop up the Xoom at a comfortable viewing angle.
- Video chat is one of the Xoom's strengths, thanks to its 2MP Web cam and Google Talk.
- Movie Studio video-editing software lets you fine-tune your home movies right on your tablet.



RIM BlackBerry
PlayBook (16GB)

\$299.99

www.blackberry.com

SKU: 2265381

RIM BlackBerry PlayBook

Research In Motion is the brains behind the BlackBerry, which has been a prominent smartphone brand for years. The BlackBerry PlayBook is Research In Motion's entry into the tablet market.

The 7-inch PlayBook comes with a dual-core 1GHz processor that will let you perform demanding tasks, such as playing PowerPoint presentations or streaming video. The PlayBook is also capable of multitasking, so you can have a Web browser open while reading a PDF (Portable Document Format) file and toggle between the two. Switching among apps is also quick due to the tablet's 1GB of built-in memory. RIM also includes codex support to improve media playback, such as Flash or HTML5 (Hypertext Markup Language) online video. The 1,024 x 600 screen resolution offers

you high detail when reading documents or watching video.

This PlayBook has 16GB of internal storage, and models are also available with 32GB or 64GB of storage. To connect to the Internet, the PlayBook features 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi. You can also connect to the PlayBook through devices with

built-in Bluetooth. For example, BlackBerry smartphone owners can pair their email, calendar, tasks, and other BlackBerry content to the PlayBook through the Bluetooth connection. POP (Post Office Protocol) email, such as Hotmail or Gmail, can be accessed through built-in apps or the tablet's Web browser. ■

Tech Tips

Here are a few simple tips to help you best use the BlackBerry PlayBook.

- The BlackBerry PlayBook offers a Wi-Fi Sharing feature that lets you access files on the tablet and copy them to and from computers on the network. Just enable Wi-Fi Sharing and access files from one of the computers on your network.
- You're likely traveling with your PlayBook, so it's a good idea to buy a case that will protect it from damage. Some cases are even capable of converting into a stand, so you won't need to hold the PlayBook.
- To switch among open apps, use a finger swiping gesture from the left- or right-hand bezel. This way, you can cycle through the apps that are already open.



Samsung Galaxy Tab

\$499.99 MSRP

www.samsung.com

SKU: 2817582

Samsung Galaxy Tab

The Samsung Galaxy Tab is a widescreen tablet backed by the power of Google's Android 3.1 operating system, called Honeycomb. This device features a large 10.1-inch LCD touchscreen that runs at 1,280 x 800 and displays images and graphics using a dense 149 pixels-per-inch screen. Samsung's

flagship tablet features a 1GHz dual-core Nvidia Tegra 2 processor paired with 1GB of RAM for smooth performance even when multitasking or gaming. Built-in sensors include a gyroscope, accelerometer, ambient light sensor, and compass for a more interactive experience with games and location-aware applications.

Bluetooth 3.0, GPS, and Wi-Fi stand in for the wireless technologies on this tablet. Samsung also utilizes 16GB of flash memory for all of your files, apps, documents, and media. A 3MP (megapixel) rear-facing camera and a 2MP front-facing camera enable video chatting, and you can also capture 720p HD video with the device's rear-facing camera. ■

Tech Tips

With full access to the Android Market and an ever growing catalog of Honeycomb-specific apps, the Samsung Galaxy Tab is as useful and fun as you want it to be.

- The Samsung TouchWiz UX is a visual makeover of Android's user interface designed to make using the Galaxy Tab even more intuitive. With it, you can add informative widgets to the Home screen, quickly view headlines, and log in to your social networks with just a swipe and a tap.
- As an Android-based device, the Galaxy Tab features deep integration with Google's various offerings, including Google Talk video chat, Calendar, Maps, Latitude, Places, Navigation, Gmail, and YouTube.
- One way to give your Galaxy Tab a productivity boost is with the Samsung Keyboard Dock (\$79.99), which gives you a full QWERTY keyboard for serious document creation tasks. Hotkeys also simplify navigating the tablet from the keyboard.

**Toshiba Thrive (16GB)**

\$399.99 MSRP

www.toshiba.com

SKU: 2769576

Toshiba Thrive

As the name of this tablet suggests, the Toshiba Thrive exists to help you flourish, particularly where customization, playing HD video with enhanced surround-sound audio, and multitasking are concerned. Competitively priced to sell, the Wi-Fi-based Thrive touts a sprawling 10.1-inch LED (light-emitting diode)-backlit multi-touch screen (1,280 x 800) that automatically adjusts contrast and brightness via integrated Adaptive Display Technology and displays movies and Web sites (including Flash-based ones) with 16:10 widescreen goodness. Resolution+ technology, meanwhile, enhances standard-definition videos' color and contrast.

Using an Nvidia dual-core 1GHz Tegra 2 mobile processor, Nvidia GeForce graphics, and 1GB of DDR2 (double-data-rate 2) RAM, the Thrive

possesses the mobile power for fast-paced gaming action, Web browsing, and multitasking. An integrated 2MP (megapixel) Web cam enables video chatting, while a rear-facing, auto-focusing 5MP digicam captures 720p-quality videos. Transferring those videos and extending internal storage is possible using the tablet's built-in memory card slot and USB 2.0 port. An HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) port, 30-pin docking port, mini-USB port, integrated Bluetooth, and headphone jack provide further connectivity options.

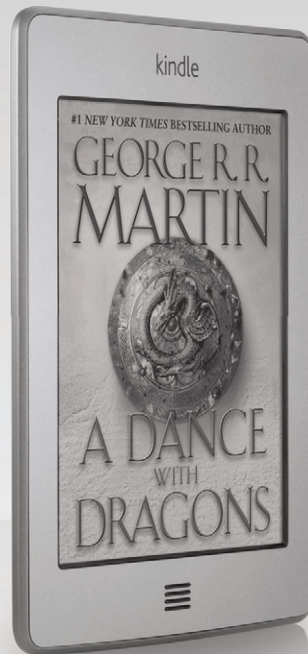
The Thrive's Android Honeycomb 3.1 implementation lets users customize their Home screens; run such included apps as YouTube, Gmail, and Google Maps; and access the Android Market to download other apps. A virtual keyboard with Swype support enables the quick

typing of messages, notes, and other text-based documents. ■

Tech Tips

Working hand in hand with the Thrive's multimedia prowess is the versatility the tablet offers to customize its appearance and enhance productivity and performance, including:

- Wirelessly connecting to a Wi-Fi-enabled printer and wirelessly accessing files using integrated Printer Share and Toshiba File Manager apps
- Switching the Thrive's slip-resistant, rubberized easy grip black exterior for an optional cover (\$19.99 each) available in five colors
- Swapping the replaceable prismatic Li-ion battery without any tools required



Amazon Kindle Touch 3G
With Special Offers

\$149 MSRP
www.amazon.com

Amazon Kindle Touch 3G With Special Offers

Amazon's Kindle has experienced multiple innovations since it first launched, each making the Kindle a better reading device. Now Amazon has released a model for just under \$150 that includes free 3G, Wi-Fi, and special offers from select companies.

The Amazon Kindle 3G Touch with Special Offers has a 6-inch black display. The display uses E Ink technology and Amazon optimizations to create an experience similar to reading a physical book: The device has sharp text and is readable in direct sunlight (making it a good beach companion). Unlike previous models, the Touch has a touchscreen instead of a keyboard. You can navigate menus and

turn pages with simple swipes and taps, just as you would with a tablet.

Because this Kindle model has both 3G and Wi-Fi connectivity, you can connect to the Internet almost anywhere at no

extra charge to download ebooks, audio books, newspapers, and more. And with a Kindle, all of your ebooks are automatically archived and backed up to your online Library at Amazon.com. ■

Tech Tips

You can do a lot with a Kindle right out of the box. Here are some tips that will get you started.

- Sign up for an Amazon account; you can download ebooks directly to your Kindle via a 3G or Wi-Fi connection.
- If you remember to turn off the Kindle's wireless feature when not downloading a book, you can maximize battery life and read for a longer period between charges.
- Cases not only protect your Kindle before and after use, but they can also make it easier and more comfortable to hold the Kindle during long reading sessions. Some cases have built-in lights for nighttime reading.



Barnes & Noble NOOK Color

\$249 MSRP

www.barnesandnoble.com/nookcolor

SKU: 1517163

Barnes & Noble NOOK Color

The popular NOOK eReader also comes in this Color edition, which presents you with a 7-inch VividView color touchscreen. The backlit display is bright and easy on your eyes, giving you a choice of six font sizes for comfortable reading anywhere.

As an ebook reader, the NOOK Color BNRV200 is full of features. Barnes & Noble's Lifetime Library service lets you re-download any ebook or magazine you've acquired for your NOOK. Automatic bookmarking returns you to the page you stopped reading, even if

you're reading the ebook on a different device using a NOOK app. And yes, you can lend ebooks to your NOOK-using friends and borrow theirs in return.

The battery in the NOOK Color can last up to eight hours, making the eReader a great companion as you travel.

The NOOK Color's storage space amply demonstrates its advantage over a traditional paper library. Its 8GB of memory gives you enough room to store up to 6,000 ebooks—that's quite a bit of shelf space. What's more, you can add even more capacity with the tablet's microSD card slot.

Take your NOOK online with Wi-Fi, and you'll have access to email, Web surfing (including sites with Flash content), and more. ■

Tech Tips

The NOOK Color bridges the gap between an eReader and a tablet.

- Read To Me technology speaks the words of a story aloud, while Read And Play lets kids interact with book characters on-screen.
- Walk into a Barnes & Noble location for free Wi-Fi on your NOOK Color, along with special offers and ebook sampling.
- The NOOK Color is backlit, so an anti-glare screen cover is the perfect accessory to protect and clarify the display.

**Kobo eReader Touch Edition**

\$129.99

www.kobobooks.com

SKU: 2840119

Kobo eReader Touch Edition

The Touch Edition of Kobo's eReader is designed so that you can turn pages by simply tapping or swiping across the screen. A long press will bring up a Highlight tool, so that you can copy and save your favorite text or look up the words in the eReader's built-in dictionary.

Kobo's eReader Touch Edition features a 6-inch E Ink Pearl display, which resembles paper and is easy to read for long periods of time. (It's also easy to read in sunlight.) The E Ink display is also more power efficient than a color LCD, so you'll enjoy a battery life of up to a month. There are two customizable font styles and up to 17 font sizes.

You can download books directly from the Kobo's online store using the eReader's 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi connection. Kobo offers more than 2.4 million books, newspapers, and magazines. The device includes 2GB of internal memory, which can store about 2,000 ebooks. To help

you move books from your PC to the Touch Edition, Kobo includes an SD (Secure Digital) card slot and a micro USB port. The SD card slot supports cards with capacities up to 32GB, which is ideal if you need extra storage for ebooks or digital images you want to view on the eReader. ■

Tech Tips

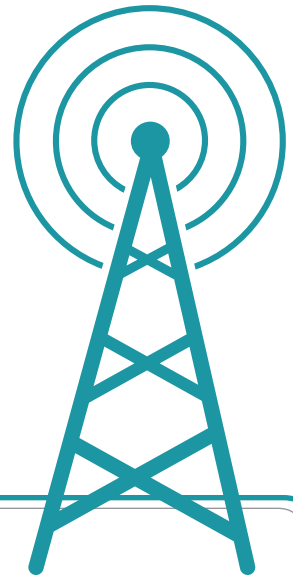
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- Pick up an SD card and you can easily transfer books to and from your PC.

Make The Right Connection

Access The Internet Wirelessly

For your favorite devices, the Web has become just another feature alongside screen size, megapixels, and storage capacity. But there's more than one way to connect to the Web with those devices these days, and we're here to clear the air on Wi-Fi and mobile broadband. In this article, we'll help you determine what you need to get started with each technology and why you should choose one over the other, or both.



Mobile Broadband

Mobile broadband (3G/4G) covers two versions of the same technology. Both are capable of delivering a reliable and swift Web connection to your mobile broadband-capable device of choice from coast to coast (depending on your carrier's coverage area). Today, 3G is the most prevalent mobile broadband standard, but the mobile broadband of tomorrow, 4G or WiMAX, offers connectivity that is even faster.

To get running with a mobile broadband network, you'll need a mobile broadband subscription with a wireless carrier or use a pay-as-you-go service and one of the following: a device with embedded mobile broadband (only available on select notebooks and devices), a USB-based mobile broadband device, a USB-based mobile hotspot device, or a mobile phone with a limited or unlimited data plan.

Best Buy Connect (bestbuyconnect.com) is one example of a mobile broadband service that lets you add a dose of the Web to your favorite notebook, netbook, or smartphone on a subscription or pay-as-you-go basis. Better yet, you can get a substantial discount on a mobile broadband-capable device by signing up for a two-year Best Buy Connect agreement.

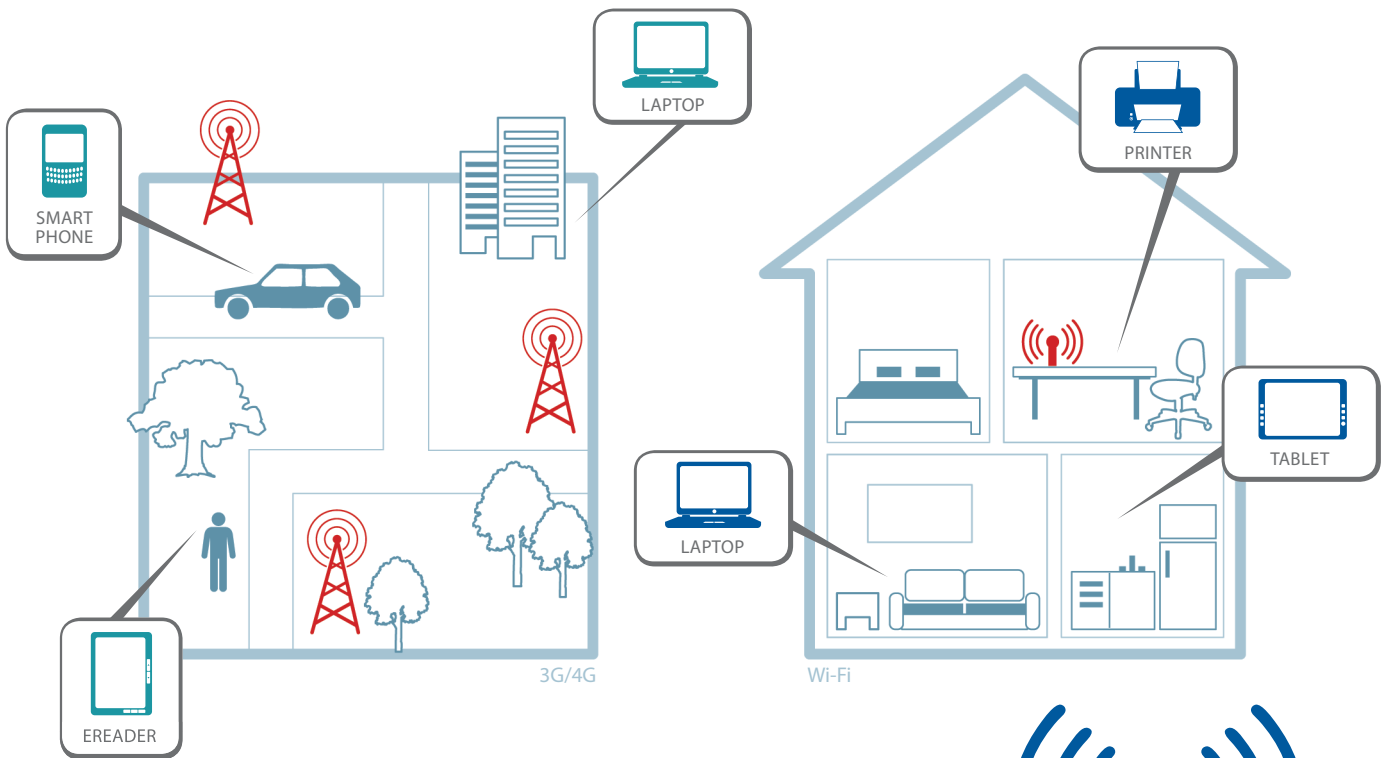
What Wi-Fi Can Do For You

- Listen to streaming music or watch TV shows while you commute to work
- Look up a map and get detailed directions if you ever get lost
- Access your email whether you're in the office or on the road
- Download the latest page-turner from your favorite author right from the beach



Best Reasons To Choose 3G/4G

- 1) Enjoy broadband Internet speeds practically wherever you get cell reception
- 2) Mobile broadband hotspots let you connect multiple Wi-Fi devices at once
- 3) Get significantly discounted devices by signing a two-year Best Buy Connect mobile broadband agreement



Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is the ubiquitous wireless protocol used by almost every consumer electronics device that can benefit from a Web connection. These include—but are not limited to—PCs, notebooks, tablets, smartphones, MP3 players, gaming consoles, Blu-ray Disc players, smart HDTVs, and digital photo frames.

In its most basic form, a Wi-Fi network consists of a subscription to a broadband cable or DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) Internet provider, a physical connection between the cable or DSL modem and a Wi-Fi router, and one or more Wi-Fi-capable devices to connect to the network. With the right settings, any of the devices listed above can connect to the wireless router and get you surfing in no time. Note, for desktop PCs to connect to a Wi-Fi network wirelessly, however, they must have a wireless adapter.

What Wi-Fi Can Do For You

- Get more entertainment mileage from your HDTV by streaming video
- Reduce wire clutter at your TV, notebook, and elsewhere around your house
- Enjoy fast uploads to share photos and videos with distant friends and family
- Using Wi-Fi instead of 3G/4G reduces your smartphone data consumption



Best Reasons To Choose Wi-Fi

- 1) Unbeatable download/upload speeds, particularly with 802.11n
- 2) Most devices can connect to the Web via Wi-Fi
- 3) Inexpensive to create a Wi-Fi network



Save Money & Get Answers

Best Buy Trade-In & Geek Squad Services

An ideal way to save money on future Best Buy (www.bestbuy.com) purchases is to trade in your old computers, mobile phones, and other qualifying products via Best Buy's Trade-In program. And the way to ensure those new purchases are installed and configured properly is using Geek Squad's service.

Best Buy Trade-In

Best Buy's Trade-In program (www.bestbuytradein.com) enables customers to exchange used products for Best Buy gift cards. Desktop PCs, laptops, monitors, digital cameras, audio receivers, gaming consoles, video games, mobile phones, eReaders, musical instruments, and other products are eligible.

Using the program essentially involves four steps, the first being getting an instant trade-in estimate at a local outlet or using an online Estimator (www.bestbuytradein.com/bb/calculators.cfm). Accept the estimate and you'll register

with the Trade-In Center and receive a confirmation of what you're trading in. Best Buy provides online users a printable prepaid shipping label to ship products in. Once it receives the device, Best

Geek Squad is a 24-hour, 365-day program that provides in-store, at-home, and phone-based technical support.

Buy inspects each product's age, operating condition, and other factors to calculate a final value. Agree to this and you'll receive a gift card within two weeks.

Geek Squad

Geek Squad (www.geeksquad.com) is a 24-hour, 365-day service providing

in-store, at-home, and phone-based technical support from 20,000-plus nationwide "special agents" covering computers, networking, appliances, and other products no matter where you bought them. Customers receive a free quote before any work begins. Geek Squad also offers a prepaid Black Tie Protection Plan, remote computer service, free downloadable tools and tips, instructional videos, and more.

Online Best Buy customers can order in-home and in-store Geek Squad service covering installation, repair and diagnostic, and other offerings for computers (such as networking, repair, and installation), TV and home-theater equipment (such as mounting and calibration), car and GPS installation (such as audio, security, and installation), gaming consoles, MP3 players (such as ripping and conversion), digital cameras (software and training), and marine products. For a complete list of services, see www.geeksquad.com/services. ■

Easy Fixes For Snags With New Electronic Devices

All-In-One Computers



If you're experiencing a problem getting your new AIO (all-in-one) computer up and running, don't panic. Often, seemingly significant problems have easy-to-execute solutions. The following are examples.

Problem: There's no image on the display after turning the AIO on.	Problem: The wireless mice or keyboard included with the AIO isn't working.	Problem: CDs/DVDs won't play when inserted in the optical drive.	Problem: No sound is coming from the AIO's speakers.
Solution: Check that the outlet you've plugged the AIO into has power by plugging another device into it. Also, make sure the AIO's power cable is plugged in securely to the system and outlet. Additionally, if plugging the AIO into a surge protector or power strip, make certain it's turned on. Also try unplugging the AIO from the strip or surge protector and plug it directly into a wall outlet.	Solution: First, make sure the peripheral in question has batteries installed. If so, try changing the batteries. Also, check if the peripheral has an On/Off switch and that's it is set to On. (You may need to remove the battery cover to locate the switch.) Additionally, check the AIO or peripheral's manual for specific instructions on pairing the wireless device to the AIO.	Solution: Check that the disc doesn't have dirt, debris, or scratches on it that may be preventing the drive from reading the disc. Also, confirm that the optical drive supports the type of disc you're attempting to play.	Solution: Try using the audio troubleshooting tool the operating system provides. For Windows 7 systems, for example, the Troubleshoot Audio Playback tool can remedy many audio-related problems. In Win7, click Start, Control Panel, and Find And Fix Problems under the System And Security section. Under the Hardware And Sound section, click Troubleshoot Audio Playback to run the tool.

If All Else Fails



When you're at your wit's end, it's time to enlist the help of experts. Geek Squad has the expertise and equipment to diagnose and solve your device's problems. See page 16 for more information.

Easy Fixes For Snags With New Electronic Devices

Laptops



Today's laptops are powerful, multi-talented machines. Many problems associated with new models, however, are easily fixable. The following are examples.

Problem: The laptop won't turn on.	Problem: The laptop indicates the battery is charging, but the laptop shuts down when the power cable is unplugged.	Problem: The laptop won't connect to a wireless network.	Problem: The laptop is running hot or shuts down unexpectedly.
Solution: <p>Make certain the laptop's battery is fully charged and the battery light is on (it will most likely flash green if sufficiently powered and red if not). If plugging the laptop into a power outlet, make certain the power cable is completely inserted into the laptop and the outlet. If plugging the laptop into a power strip or surge protector make sure it is powered on.</p>	Solution: <p>Check that the battery is properly installed and not loose or slightly dislodged. If the problem persists, remove the battery completely and reinsert it. Further, try using a spare battery, if available, to determine if the battery is bad.</p>	Solution: <p>Many laptops have a switch on the unit to turn the unit's built-in wireless adapter on or off. It's possible the switch was accidentally engaged and the adapter disabled. Try engaging the switch and enabling the adapter. Also, if an LED (light-emitting diode) accompanies the switch, check the LED color. Typically, green signifies the adapter is on, and red signifies it is off.</p>	Solution: <p>Using a laptop on a soft, cushioned surface, such as on top of a pillow or blanket, can block the laptop's vents, causing the cooling fan to overwork and heat to build up. Eventually, these factors can cause an unexpected shutdown. Ideally, use the laptop on a hard, flat surface that won't block the vents.</p>

If All Else Fails



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Easy Fixes For Snags With New Electronic Devices

Tablets



Arguably, there's nothing as exciting currently as buying a tablet and putting it to use. Occasionally, however, you may experience problems. Fortunately, many common problems have easy fixes. The following are examples.

Problem:

The tablet won't connect to a wireless network.

Solution:

First, verify that Wi-Fi is enabled on the tablet. Also, for networks that require you to enter a password to connect, make certain you've typed the correct password and reattempt joining the network.

Problem:

Wi-Fi is enabled and the right password is entered, but the tablet still won't connect.

Solution:

The tablet may be out of reach of the wireless router's coverage area or unable to obtain a signal due to obstructions, such as thick, concrete walls. Try moving the tablet closer to the router.

Problem:

The computer the tablet is plugged into won't recognize it.

Solution:

Depending on the tablet, you may need to use a USB 2.0 port for power reasons. Try using a USB port located on back of the computer and not a port built into a monitor, keyboard, or USB hub.

Problem:

Some desired apps aren't available for the tablet.

Solution:

Some apps are developed to only run on certain platforms. For example, an app you want to run on your tablet may only be available for Android-based tablets and not those running iOS or Windows.

Problem:

The tablet's battery drains quickly.

Solution:

To get more life out of the tablet's battery, disable Wi-Fi when you don't need an Internet connection for extended periods. Also, reducing the screen's brightness and shortening the time before the screen turns off due to inactivity can save battery power.

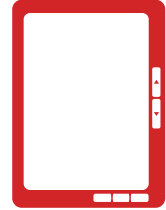
If All Else Fails



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Easy Fixes For Snags With New Electronic Devices

eReader



eReader capabilities have come a long way in recent years. Still, you may run into problems upon powering up your new unit. The following are solutions for common problems.

Problem: The eReader screen doesn't respond at all.	Problem: The screen won't shift from landscape to portrait views or vice versa.	Problem: An ebook won't download to the eReader over a 3G connection.
Solution: Try resetting the device. Depending on the particular model, the process may differ but typically will involve some form of holding a combination of buttons for a designated time. Elsewhere, try recharging the device's battery for several hours before restarting it.	Solution: Check if the eReader has an automatic rotating setting and that it is enabled.	Solution: Check that wireless connectivity is enabled and that the strength of the wireless signal is sufficient. Also, make certain the device has sufficient battery power.
Problem: The computer won't recognize the eReader when connected via USB port.	Problem: The eReader won't play an audio book or music file.	Problem: The device won't open files related to certain office suites.
Solution: Try using a different USB port, preferably one on the back of the computer. Also, try using a different USB cable. Elsewhere, attempt to restart the eReader and the computer.	Solution: Check that the model supports the file type you're trying to play. Also, note if the device requires storing audio books and music files in a specific device folder.	Solution: Respective eReaders support different file types. Depending on the model, an eReader may not support a particular image, audio, or document file or ebook format you're attempting to open. Check the manual for specific file support.

If All Else Fails

When you're at your wit's end, it's time to enlist the help of experts. Geek Squad has the expertise and equipment to diagnose and solve your device's problems. See page 16 for more information.



Picture-Perfect Prints

Get More From Your Photo Printer

Printing your own photos is great. You get convenience, instant output, and full control over the whole process. Of course, you also assume full responsibility for the quality of your prints. There's no one else to blame if your shots don't turn out. On the other hand, you deserve all the credit when everything looks great. We'll give you some ideas to help make sure you can proudly claim those prints as your own.

Ink Cartridge

The ink cartridge is, figuratively speaking, where the

rubber meets the road. Make sure you have the correct cartridge precisely suited for your model. Also be aware that, although refurbished or refilled cartridges can be significantly cheaper,

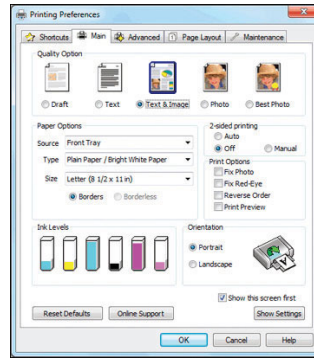


You'll get the best quality using new ink cartridges from brands recommended by your printer's manufacturer.

some are less reliable and less accurate. If you're concerned about the quality of your photo printing, paying a little extra for new cartridges directly from your printer's manufacturer is a good place to start.

Regularly cleaning print heads is a good way to ensure reliable and accurate printing. For physical cleaning, dip a microfiber cloth in a little rubbing alcohol and wipe the cartridge contacts gently. From your printer's built-in menu or software utilities, you can also find and select the option to clean the print heads. This routine will clear out any ink particles or other tiny debris that might be impacting print performance. Specific steps vary with

Most leading photo printers include software that helps you optimize settings and image quality.



different manufacturers and models, so check your printer's documentation if you're not sure.

Beyond print head cleaning, alignment is important as well. Over time, the print mechanism can move out of position ever so slightly, which can impact the sharpness and color of your prints. Just as with the cleaning function, most printers' menus or applications include an alignment feature that will make sure the print head and sensors are correctly aligned.

Options & Settings

Each printer and each manufacturer offers different options and settings. Just as with print head and ink cartridge maintenance, you'll have to spend a little time getting familiar with your model's menus and users guide. Depending on how sophisticated your printer is, there may be a learning curve to overcome, but if you're seeking to improve print quality, you'll probably find that time and effort well spent.

First, be mindful of resolution and other print quality options. Print (and shoot) at the highest resolution common to both your camera and your printer.

If your printer has auto-color correction or color balance settings, try using them. Automated editing and enhancement tools don't always make shots better, and they're

usually no match for an expert eye directing powerful manual editing tools. But not everyone has that expertise or the budget for advanced software. Take a couple shots you like, print them with the default settings, and then print them with several color-corrected variations. If you like the new settings better, use them. If not, don't. But it won't cost you much to run the experiment, and you just might discover an invaluable new option.

Finally, keep your printer drivers and printer software current. It's easy to forget this step, but making sure you have the latest updates from the manufacturer is important. Companies will often fix bugs and provide enhancements that

solve common problems and keep your prints looking sharp.

Photo Paper

We know it's easy to get caught up in all the cool digital and mechanical processes that go into photo printing. But don't underestimate the importance of all that work's eventual destination: the paper.

First, perform a basic setup review. Make sure you're using the right type of photo paper for your printer, and that you're printing on the correct side of the paper. Also, each time you print, check your settings to make sure you match the settings for type and size to the actual paper you're using for those shots. If you're using cheap or off-brand photo paper, try a pack of whatever your printer manufacturer recommends to see if it makes a difference.

When you're sure the right elements are in place, try experimenting with different paper sizes and with both borderless and bordered prints. You can make your picture look nicer and more professional with borderless prints, and you'll be surprised at how much a change in scale, either up or down, can alter the appeal of many photos. Use some of the techniques described below to crop images down in size, and don't be afraid to blow up high-res shots into large prints if you have the printer and resolution for it.

Editing

A large part of your outcome is determined before the first bytes ever hit the printer. Image editing tools used to be firmly emplaced within the world of specialized (and expensive) graphic design software. But nowadays, photo-editing software for home users provide plenty of features that will improve your pictures.

Remember to do all of your editing *after* cropping, which we'll discuss in a second. That way the adjustments only apply to the part of the shot you're actually printing and won't be affected by parts of the image you're discarding anyway. Also, make sure to maintain an



Selecting the right photo paper to match your printer is critical for getting good prints.



The Epson Artisan 837 (\$299.99; www.epson.com) uses separate ink cartridges, so you only have to replace the ink you use.

original, full-resolution, unedited copy of each picture so that you can go back to the beginning at any point.

The first and simplest thing you can do to improve the appearance of prints is to take up cropping. Almost every editing tool gives you options to cut out parts of the photo from any of the four sides. Most of us don't take snapshots with an eye toward composition, and even professional photographers crop their most well-planned photos. Getting rid of extraneous elements, such as the half of Grandpa's leg and arm jutting into the birthday cake shot, helps draw attention to the important areas you want to highlight, such as Junior's attempt to blow out his candles. Even more subtle cropping can remove dead space and bring more balance to your shot, increasing its appeal.

Once you have the final portion of the shot composed, explore some of the editing options. Most image-editing programs offer auto-correct options which apply a range of updates to balance, contrast, layers, and other

settings based on an automatic assessment of your current photo. Just as with a printer's own color correction settings, sometimes these tools are helpful and sometimes they're not. But it's easy enough to apply them, see if you like the results, and reverse or undo if not.

tool generally improves your shots, and you're printing a group of photos where general minor enhancements are exactly what you're looking for, this tool can be very helpful.

If you want to move beyond pre-packaged automatic updates, take

... don't underestimate the importance of all that work's eventual destination: the paper.

Batch-editing features apply the kinds of automatic updates previously described to a group of photos. You gain the efficiency of applying the changes to a group of pictures at once, but you lose the ability to review and remove the updates one by one. However, if you're comfortable that your automatic photo enhancement

the time to learn what options your software provides for making manual adjustments to settings such as brightness, shadows, color levels, and filters or special effects. Again, there may be a learning curve involved but if you want to improve photo editing, it's an investment worth making. ■

Your Next Photo Printer: What To Look For

Deciding on a photo printer is no easy matter. Here are a few key things to consider when shopping.

Print quality. Resolution is an important component of print quality, but not the only factor. Research each model's reputation and compare actual printouts side by side, if possible.

Individual ink cartridges. Some manufacturers combine their ink wells into a single cartridge. This is convenient, but you can end up wasting ink (and money) if you use some colors more than others.

Direct printing. It's a lot quicker and easier to print directly from a memory card or wireless connec-

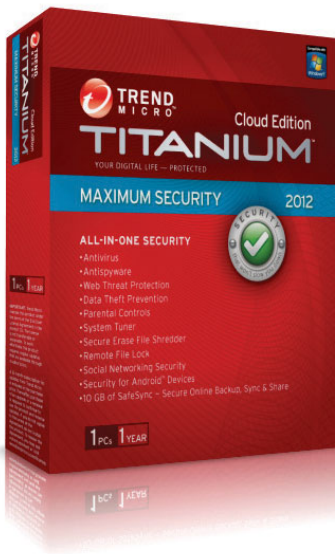
tion than it is to work with a PC as the middleman. This is especially useful if your printer has built-in image-editing options and a preview screen.

Speed. The more you print, the less you want to wait around for hours. Keep speed (and quality) in mind when comparing printer models.

Cost per print. The cheapest options are rarely the best, but the most expensive options don't always provide good value, either. In addition to the price of the printer itself, consider the cost of paper along with the price and expected lifespan of the ink cartridges.

Ovation

Each month, the *Smart Computing* staff gets to work with all kinds of new computing and consumer electronics products. Here are some of the most exciting products to cross our desks.



Titanium Maximum Security

\$79.95 | Trend Micro | us.trendmicro.com

These days, you need more than an antivirus program to keep your computer free of malware and junk. That's where comprehensive security suites, such as Trend Micro Titanium Maximum Security, come in. The suite protects your computer from viruses, spyware, and other online threats (including threats that may lurk on social networks) and also protects you: It watches your personal information to make sure it doesn't leave your computer without your authorization. If you have ever been a victim of identity theft, you know how important this sort of protection can be.

Other noteworthy tools include parental controls, backup and sync capabilities, a system tuner, and file shredder. Titanium Maximum Security also provides protection for certain mobile devices, including Android, iOS (iPhone and iPad), Symbian, and Windows smartphones.

HD Webcam C270

\$39.99 | Logitech | www.logitech.com

With the Logitech C270 Web cam, staying in touch with your out-of-state friends and family has never been easier. The C270 lets you video chat in HD at resolutions up to 1,280 x 720 and send still images up to 3MP (megapixels).

The C270 comes with Logitech's own video-calling software, Vid HD, but it is also compatible with Skype, Windows Live Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, and other popular IM applications. To get the best video-calling experience, Logitech has developed several technologies that are included in the C270. Fluid Crystal technology automatically adjusts the frame rate, color, and sharpness to provide the best possible picture. The built-in mic features RightSound technology to help reduce background noise, and RightLight technology helps provide clear images in low-light conditions.

Also included is a universal clip that fits most laptops and monitors for easy positioning, so all you have to worry about is smiling for the camera.



News From The Help Desk

Common Tech Questions

Q When I stream video from the Internet, the video is choppy. Sometimes, it stops completely. How can I fix this?

A If someone else is using your network, the extra traffic may be to blame. In most cases, a friend or co-worker can surf the Internet without affecting your video, but if that user uploads or downloads large files, your connection could get bogged down. Check to make sure your network's other computers aren't causing the traffic slowdown. If your video device connects to your network wirelessly, move the adapter to determine whether signal strength problems are to blame.

Q When I open my Internet browser or email program, a window prompts me to enter the username and password for my old (long-closed) dial-up account. How can I get rid of this?

A This sometimes happens when you switch from dial-up Internet access to broadband. If Windows is still configured to access your dial-up account, it may attempt to do so, even though you now have broadband Internet. If the problem occurs when you open your browser, click the Start button and then click Control Panel. Click Network And Internet and then click Internet Options. When the Internet Properties menu appears, click the Connections tab. If the Dial-Up And Virtual Private Network Settings box is empty, this isn't the problem. If a connection is there, that is your dial-up connection. Select it and then click the Remove button. Once these settings are removed, you should have no trouble opening your browser.

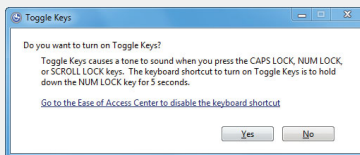
Q I don't like the icons on the right side of the Taskbar. How do I remove them?

A The far-right section of the Taskbar, known as the Notification

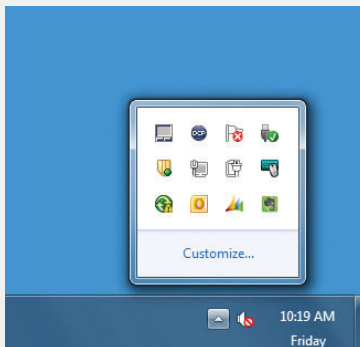
Area (also known as the System Tray), has a cluster of icons that are meant to alert you to important conditions or events, such as muted volume or the arrival of new email. Usually, they're not very distracting (and most are hidden from view by default), but you don't need to put up with icons if you don't like them. Right-click the Taskbar and click Properties. When the Taskbar And Start Menu Properties window appears, click the Taskbar tab (this tab is likely open by default) and then click the Customize button in the Notification Area section of the tab. When the Notification Area Icons window appears, click Turn System Icons On Or Off. Here, you can disable any icon. If you don't see an icon that you want to remove, click Customize Notification Icons and browse this list, which will likely have your icon. Click the drop-down menu next to it and choose the option you prefer.

Q Windows used to play a sound whenever I pressed the CAPS LOCK key. It doesn't do that anymore. How do I restart this feature?

A The feature that creates a tone when you press the CAPS LOCK key is known as Toggle Keys. When enabled, it also plays sounds for NUM LOCK and SCROLL LOCK keys. Microsoft built the feature into Windows for users who sometimes accidentally press these keys. We suspect that most people who take advantage of this feature rely on it to prevent them from entering passwords while CAPS LOCK is enabled. Because you often can't see the password on the screen, it's easy to not notice that you're typing your password in caps. The easiest way to enable this feature is to press and hold the NUM LOCK key for five seconds. Click Yes when the Toggle Keys window appears and you're set: Tones will play to alert you whenever you press the CAPS, NUM, and SCROLL LOCK keys. If you're interested in other typing-related accessibility



Your keyboard has a light to remind you that CAPS LOCK is on, but it's easy to miss. Enable Toggle Keys to get an audible alert when you press the CAPS LOCK key.

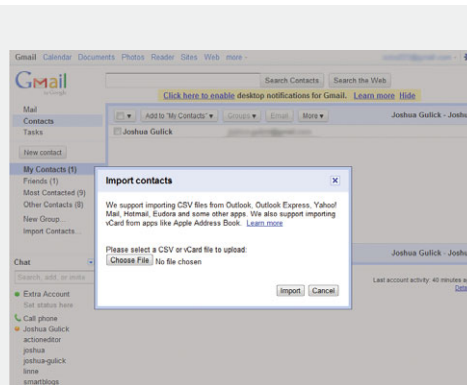


Click the arrow in the Notifications Area to view hidden notification icons. Click an icon to access the program or its features.

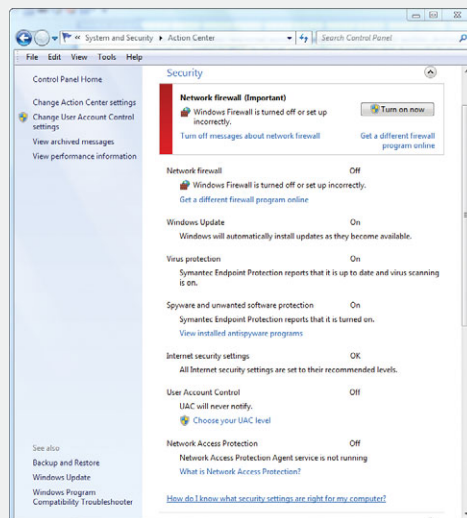
features, click the Start button and then click Control Panel. Click Ease Of Access and then click Ease Of Access Center. Under Explore All Settings, click Make The Keyboard Easier To Use. Here you can enable features that control keystroke rates, change the keyboard layout, and even control the mouse cursor.

Q I switched from one email service to another. All of my contacts are still in my old email account. How can I move them to my new account?

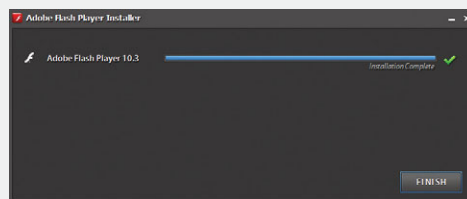
A Shuffling your contacts between email services is easy. Some services, such as Yahoo!, can import your contacts directly from your old AOL, Gmail, Hotmail, or other account (and even from your email client, in some cases), so long as you're willing to provide your username and password for the old account. To get started, open your new email account, navigate to the Contacts section, and look for an Import Contacts (or similar) button. (In Gmail, click the Gear icon in the upper-right corner, select Mail Settings, and then click Accounts And Import for direct import tools.) Don't worry if your new account doesn't import contacts directly—you can still transfer your contacts in three easy steps. First, use the old account's Export tool to copy your contacts into a CSV (Comma Separated Values) file. Next, save that file to your computer. Finally, open your new email account and use the Import tool to pull the contacts out of the CSV file. (NOTE: Export tools create new copies of the contact information—they won't remove your contacts from your old account.)



CSV files are supported by most email clients and services. If you're exporting your contacts from your old account and you're not sure which format to use, choose CSV.



Not sure which applications are protecting your computer? Click Start, Control Panel, System And Security, and Review Your Computer's Status And Resolve Issues. Then click the arrow next to Security.



Installing Adobe Flash Player is a snap. A progress bar keeps you updated and lets you know when the installation completes.

Q Can I run two security programs on my computer?

A Many of the error messages and system glitches we see are caused by software conflicts—particularly between security programs. If you run two antivirus programs, for example, you'll likely encounter problems when the programs attempt to use the same resources. You can expect the same problem if you have a security suite and a separate antivirus program, as the security suite already has anti-virus capabilities. A good rule of thumb is to run a software firewall, an antivirus program, and an antispyware program. You can buy the software from multiple brands, but you'll find certain perks in buying a security suite that includes all three programs (such as being able to manage all of the software from a single interface).

Q Adobe Flash Player asks me to install an update every time I reboot my PC. I think it's the same update. How can I stop this message from appearing?

A Uninstalling Flash Player and then downloading and installing the latest version is a fast and easy way to remove many glitches. You can uninstall the program in the Control Panel, but we find that Adobe's custom uninstaller is a thorough tool. Download the uninstaller from tinyurl.com/fluninstall. Next, close any open programs on your computer, including browsers and instant message applications. Finally, run the uninstaller by double-clicking the file you downloaded. Once the software has been uninstalled, visit get.adobe.com/flashplayer to download the latest version. ■

Jump-Start Your PC

Troubleshoot Your Way Out Of New Computer Woes

In an ideal world, a new PC or laptop would operate without hiccups or errors when you unbox and set it up for the first time. But, we all know computers aren't perfect. The good news is that there are plenty of troubleshooting actions you can perform to get your computer to do what it's supposed to do. In this article, we walk you through some of the common issues that might arise when you're getting to know your computer.

My Computer Won't Turn On

1 Start by making sure that you pressed the Power button. (Make sure you've pressed the Power button on your monitor, too.) The Power button typically has an icon that resembles a circle with a vertical line at the top.

2 If you have a desktop, unplug the power cable from your PC (and the wall outlet) and then plug it back in. A loose cable is usually to blame for a PC that won't start. If the power cable isn't the problem, look for a switch near the cable at the back of the PC. Some computer power supplies have a switch that can be flipped to cut off power. Flip the switch and then press the Power button again.

3 If you have a laptop, start by reseating the battery. If the battery isn't firmly locked into place, it may not provide any power to the laptop. If this doesn't solve the problem, connect

the laptop to the wall outlet and let the battery fully charge.

My Computer Is On But The Screen Is Blank

If your monitor appears blank but your PC is active, be sure to double-check the monitor-to-computer video connection.

1 Unplug the monitor's power cable from the monitor (and the wall outlet) and then plug the cable back in. Also, make sure the video cable is firmly connected to your computer and the monitor. Reconnect any unplugged or loose cables.

2 Is there a small colored light illuminated in the corner of your monitor? If not, push the Power button. Locate the Power icon, which looks like

a circle with a line protruding from the top of it.

3 Open the monitor's Brightness Settings. To do so, find the button on the front of the monitor that has an icon that resembles a light bulb or sun. Push it to see if the brightness level is set to a dim level. Increase the brightness to a comfortable level for your eyes.

4 Your PC might be in Sleep or Hibernation mode. To "wake" it and view your desktop, try pressing the ENTER key, moving your mouse, and pressing the Power button.

My PC Is On But Doesn't Recognize Commands From The Keyboard Or Mouse

Pressing CTRL-ALT-DELETE twice will shut down your computer if your PC doesn't respond to mouse clicks. Or, you can use your mouse to shut down and restart the system if the keyboard is causing the issue.

1 If your programs and applications don't respond to the keyboard typing, use your mouse to shut down the computer. Unplug the keyboard from your PC and then reconnect it. Restart



My Computer Is On But The Screen Is Blank



My PC Is On But Doesn't Recognize Commands From The Keyboard Or Mouse

your PC to determine if the reconnection corrected the problem. (If necessary, you can press and hold the Power button to shut down the PC.)

2 If your mouse doesn't respond, but your keyboard does, use the WINDOWS, ARROW, and ENTER keys to open the Start menu and shut down the computer. Unplug your mouse and then reconnect it. (If necessary, you can press and hold the Power button to shut down the PC.)

3 If you're using a wireless keyboard and mouse, ensure that the peripherals are in range of the wireless receiver and all batteries in the devices are new.

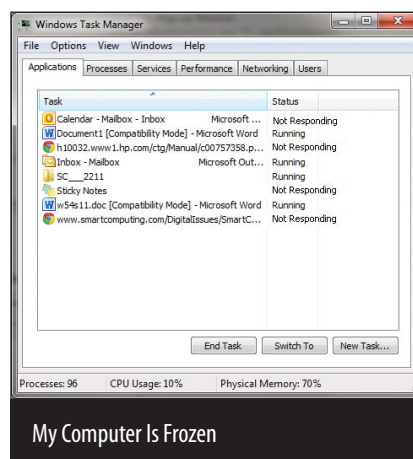
4 If these steps don't enable peripheral communication with the PC, try reinstalling your device drivers. You can download these from the manufacturer's Web site.

My Computer Is Frozen

The Windows Task Manager helps you find programs that are not

running properly. Select a frozen application and click End Task.

1 Press CTRL-ALT-DELETE twice to shut down the system. Or, you can press and hold the Power button until it shuts down. Wait approximately 10 seconds before you restart the system.



My Computer Is Frozen

2 If your PC is working, but a program is frozen, press CTRL-ALT-DELETE and click the Task Manager. Select the program that is frozen and then click End Task. (The Task Manager's Status

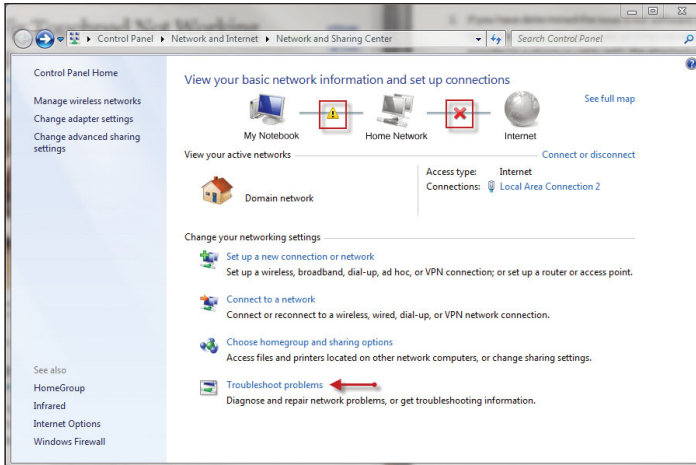
column will probably say "Not Responding" next to that program.)

My Laptop Won't Connect To The Internet Via Wi-Fi

If you notice these icons (outlined in the red boxes) when you're in the Network And Sharing Center, click Troubleshoot Problems to determine the cause of the disconnection.

1 Locate the network icon in the bottom-right corner of the Taskbar. Right-click it and select Open Network And Sharing Center. If you see an exclamation point in a yellow triangle or a red X between your network and Internet icons, click Troubleshoot Problems. Next, click Internet Connections to run a diagnostic and follow any subsequent instructions.

2 If you have determined the issue is not software-related, check your wireless networking hardware, which should include a broadband modem (connected by your Internet service provider to a phone or cable jack), the attached wireless router, and



My Laptop Won't Connect To The Internet Via Wi-Fi

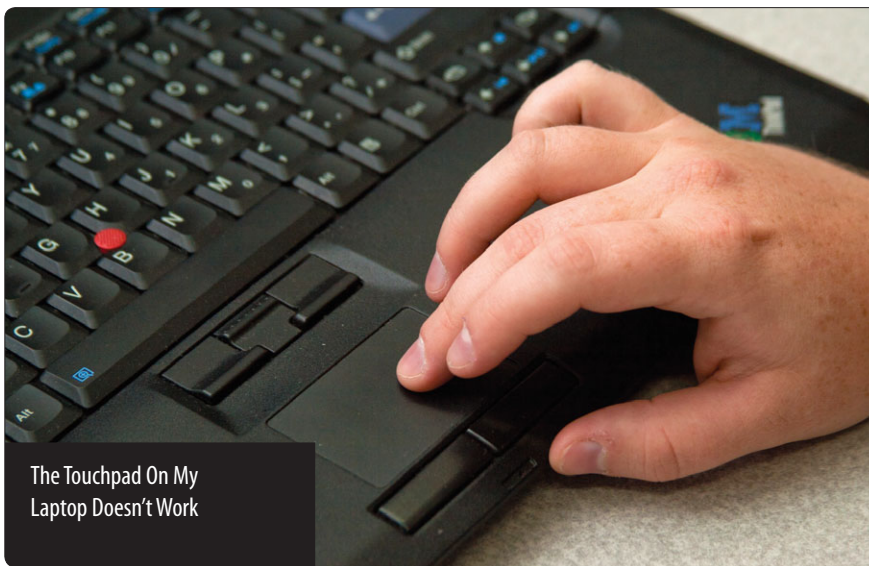
pressing a couple of keys. To do so, find the FN (function) on your laptop's keyboard. (It's typically situated in the lower-right or lower-left corner.) Next, locate the corresponding F key (between F1 through F12). Press FN and then press the F key. A device settings dialogue box should appear and give you the option to enable your touchpad. If this doesn't work, press both buttons simultaneously and test the touchpad again.

My Computer Doesn't Play Any Sounds

Speakers that don't produce sound may only need to be unmuted. To turn on the sound, click the speaker icon in the Volume slider.

1 Locate the Volume buttons or knob on your PC or laptop. Ensure that the volume is turned up to an audible level.

2 Click the speaker icon in the Notifications Area of the Taskbar. Click and drag the Volume slider up if it's positioned at a low level. Also, make sure that there is no red cross-through icon



The Touchpad On My Laptop Doesn't Work

a power source. Ensure that all cables are properly connected and that both the modem and the router are operating normally (consult the appropriate manufacturer manuals for detail information). If necessary, press any Reset buttons you see or unplug the power cables from both devices, wait 10 seconds, and then plug them in again.

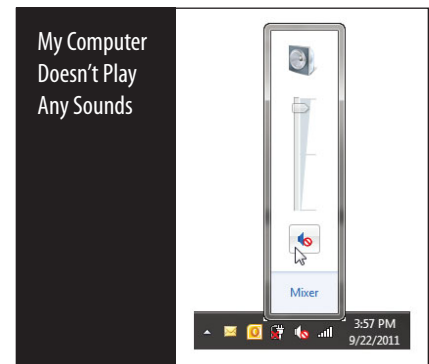
3 If you're trying to connect a hotspot or friend's network, ask whether

you need to enter a password. Many wireless networks are encrypted.

The Touchpad On My Laptop Doesn't Work

When your touchpad on your laptop is unresponsive, try pressing the FN key and the corresponding touchpad activation key.

1 You can often reactivate a disabled touchpad by simply locating and



My Computer Doesn't Play Any Sounds

next to the speaker under the volume slider—it represents the Mute command. Click the bottom speaker icon to turn off Mute. ■



If All Else Fails

When you're at your wit's end, it's time to enlist the help of Geek Squad, which has the tools to diagnose and solve many computer problems. Geek Squad can also provide services that will help you during the life of your PC, including setup services and Black Tie Protection. To learn more about what Geek Squad can do for your computer, see page 16.

PestControl

REMOVE STUBBORN BUGS

If a virus slips past your computer's defenses, it's time to roll up your sleeves and go after the bug yourself. Each month, we tell you how to remove some of the most disruptive malware on the Internet.

THINKPOINT

DESCRIPTION: Similar to Smart Engine (covered in the October 2011 issue), ThinkPoint is a rogue anti-virus program designed to convince you that your computer is overrun with malware, Trojans, and other malicious applications. It also encourages you to buy the software. But ThinkPoint has a few unique characteristics that make it even trickier than Smart Engine.

As with any virus, the only thing you can do is remove it, and that's where Kaspersky's Small Office Security software (www.kaspersky.com) comes in. The \$199 price tag includes a subscription for one file server and five computers for one year. We'll show you how to remove ThinkPoint using Small Office Security.

How To Spot ThinkPoint

Again, ThinkPoint is easy to spot because of its prominent logo and Windows-style design. A menu appears, telling you that your computer is infected. That is followed by progressively worse issues that affect your computer's performance. ThinkPoint has the capability to prevent you from using basic Windows applications, such as the Task Manager, and it can make it difficult to shut down or restart the computer via Windows, which means you may have to perform a manual shut-down by pressing the Power button for five seconds (or by unplugging your computer entirely). Once you boot the computer back up, you should open up your installed antivirus program and run a full system scan.

How To Remove ThinkPoint

There is no easy alternative to removing ThinkPoint other than to run an antivirus scan, so

installing software such as Kaspersky Small Office Security, is an important first step. If your PC already has antivirus software (that didn't pick up ThinkPoint), uninstall it before installing Kaspersky.

Visit Kaspersky.com and click Products & Services. Click View All Products under Home & Small Office Security.

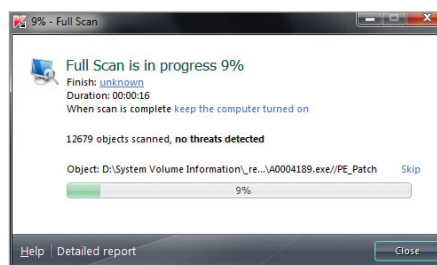
Then select Small Office Security. You can choose to download a trial version of the software or download the full version. The software can be installed on multiple machines and managed from a central location.

Next, download the software and follow the installation Wizard. After the program is installed, one of the following screens will ask you to Enable Protection By Administrator Password. This allows you to prevent access to security settings. Kaspersky's software will then run a System Analysis, which automatically creates a list of "trusted applications."

The first thing you should do once you open the program is update the software's database. This makes sure that solutions for the newest threats are supported and it will add an extra layer of security to your computer. Select Scan from the menu to the left and then start a full scan. If you need to stop the scan, you can do so by clicking it again. You can always resume the scan later or start a new one at a more convenient time. The scan should remove the malware. ■



Kaspersky's Small Office Security features a Security Zone where you can view which applications on your computer are trusted and which are potentially harmful.



This pop-up tells you when the scan should finish, whether there are any threats, and gives you the option to automatically shut down your computer after the scan is completed.

When a computer breaks down, everyone looks to you for the solution.

That's why you look to *Smart Computing*. Each issue is packed with troubleshooting information that will help you spot the source of the problem and get your system humming again. Our plain-English tutorials and large, clear pictures give you the confidence and the knowledge you need when repairing an ailing PC. And once your computer is running again, *Smart Computing's* software and hardware maintenance tips will help you keep it that way. Plus, you'll find info on all the new products you'll need for your home and office.

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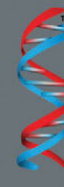


Create and Print Verified Checks!

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- ✓ Create and Print Custom Business and Personal Checks
- ✓ Create and Print Invoices and Business Cards
- ✓ ECO Friendly - Send and Receive E-mail Checks
- ✓ 150 Checks and Deposit Slips Included

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DNA Secure™



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